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COMPUTER +video GAMES

BLASTEROIDS ROCKS OFF WITH MUCOR THE SLIME



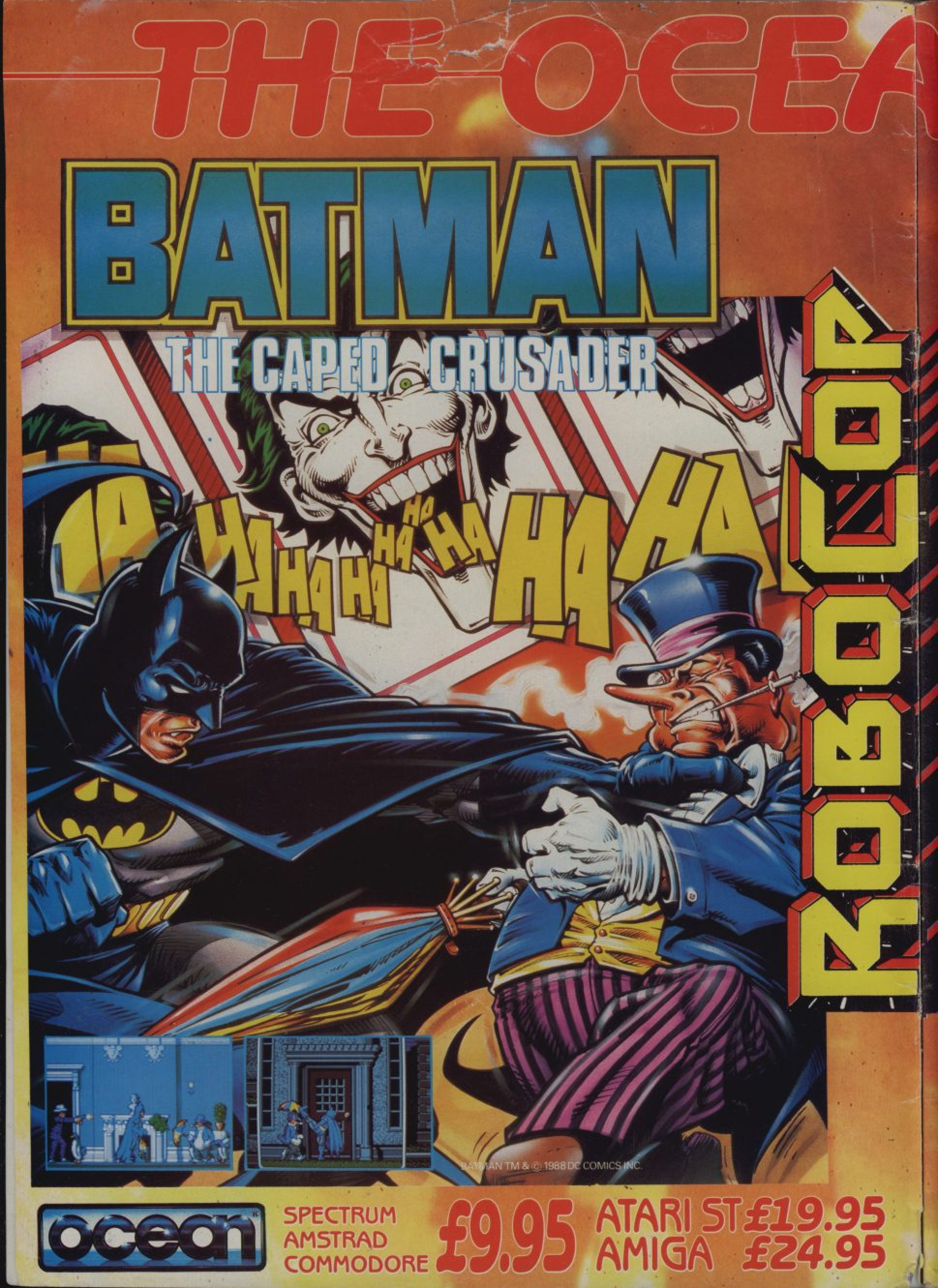
WIN: AN ST

KONIX CONSOLE REVEALED

ARCADE ACTION – THE GAMES OF '89 – SHOW REPORT

BUMPER SEGA SPECIAL – R-TYPE, RASTAN, RAMPAGE EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

REVIEWED: DRAGON'S LAIR, BATTLEHAWKS, WEC LE MANS, MAN HUNTER, DRAGON NINJA.


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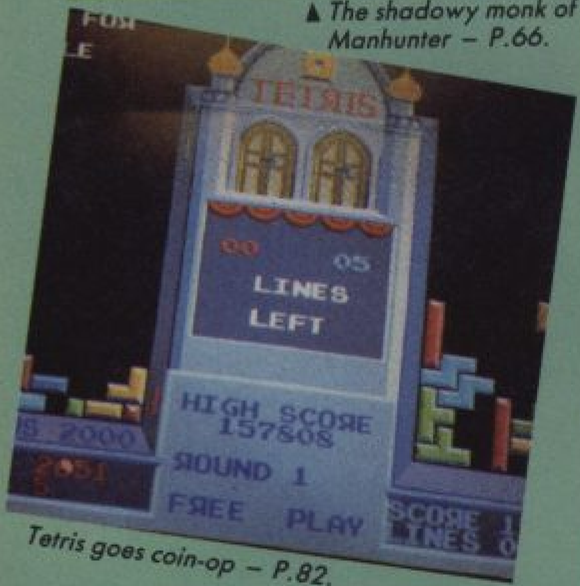


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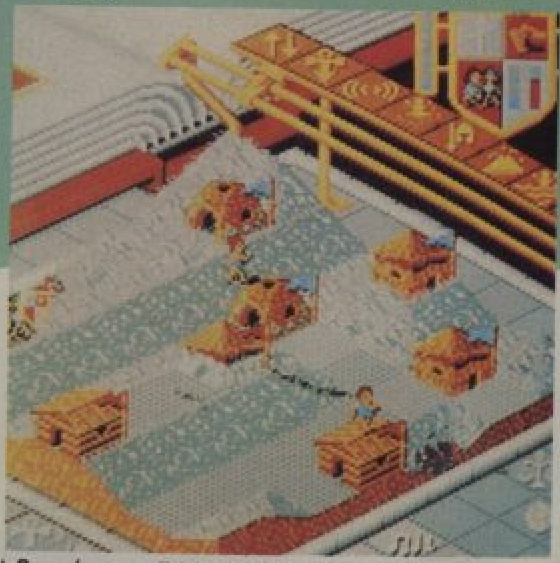
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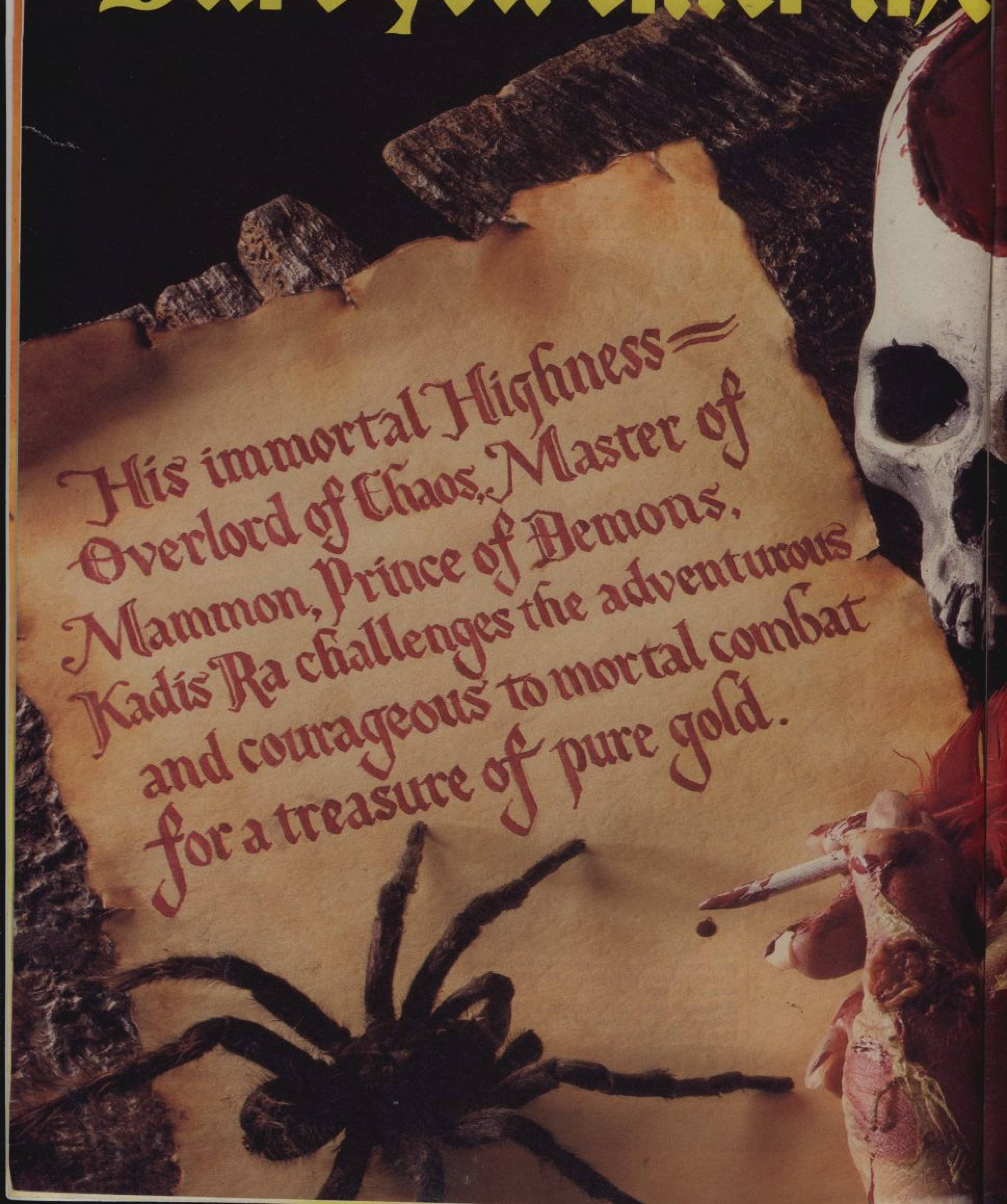


▲ War In Middle Earth – Tolkien war game – P.70.



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Dare you enter the



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Welcome strangers to the fantasy world of Fist, the ultimate game of heroic adventure. Within a vast dark labyrinth you must pit your wits against the hideous legions of the undead. Here hidden riches of great worth will reward the skilled and daring, swift death the faint of heart.

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Fax

Titus Titan



It's futuresports time again, thanks to Titus, who take us to Vegapolis in the year 2114 for the first game of *Titan*. The man behind Titan is a certain Professor Hybris who has invented something called a leisure axle, which is apparently fundamental to this rather deadly sport.

What it all boils down to is steering your power ball across 80 huge scrolling playfields using a magnetic racket to avoid death-dealing icons. It's fast, it's funky, it's available in reputable software retailers from February on the ST, Amiga, PC, Amstrad and C64 with a Spectrum version to follow. Review next month.



S Gold go Wacko



Michael "Oooowww!" Jackson's new "Off The Wall" adventure movie, *Moonwalker* was no sooner screened than licensed by master licensees, US Gold. If you're one of the lucky ones and haven't actually seen the film, here is a brief synopsis courtesy of the FAX Brief Synopses Inc (Limp Movies Dept.).

Nasty Mr Big is out to wreck the lives of children worldwide, by getting them addicted to dangerous drugs, but luckily, Michael and the Under Eleven World Saving Team are on the case. Impowered with astral inspiration by a passing meteorite, the heroic Mr J transforms himself from multi-millionaire pop star to a rabbit/car/spacecraft/robot and saves the day in the process. Darn, we've given the ending away.

US Gold are convinced this is perfect material for a computer game and are planning un unprecedented marketing campaign to lead up to the *Moonwalker* launch in the autumn. Will it be a "Thriller"? Will there be anything on the market to "Beat It"? Or will it be totally "Bad"?



Burning







You Hum it, Son....

Another interesting widget on show at the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show in January was the Vocalizer 1000, which although it has more buttons than a commissionaire's coat, must be one of the simplest musical instruments to play. All you have to do is hum, whistle or sing your tune into the supplied microphone and the machine records that varying pitches so that it can play the tune back with any one of 28 instrument sounds. The Vocalizer comes with several built-in songs for you to sing along with, and the plug-in cartridges you can see littered around it in our pic provide even more melodies to harmonise to. You can even plug your Vocalizer into any MIDI-compatible equipment or form an instant band by connecting two or more units together! Yes indeedy, the possibilities are endless, provided you've got £150 and the air-fare to the USA where it's apparently selling like hot McMuffins.



a Bright



Much-loved software adventurer and Tarby fan, Gary Liddon, is following up his success with Mastertronic's Ricochet by joining forces with art supremo, Paul Docherty to produce *Tyger Tyger* for Firebird. In it, you guide a fearless "Sumo-type" (ie "a fat bully") through four levels of medieval mayhem and aardvarks to what promises to be "a mind blowing finale". It's sure to be a game with tragedy, passion, comedy, multi-directional scrolling and extra weapons, and it'll be available on C64, Spectrum and Amstrad CPC before you can say "Jack Robinson". If not sooner, even!

Video Nazis

While the West German authorities are willing and able to ban games like Silent Service and even mags like (gasp!) C+VG because of the corrupting influence they may have on their children, they are unfortunately powerless to stop a more sinister form of computer entertainment. According to a recent report in that prestigious journal, The Independent, there is a network of neo-Nazi hackers in Europe who produce blatantly Fascist software then circulate it via MODEM operated mailboxes and bulletin boards. The perpetrators are then untraceable, and are free to watch their software being circulated via electronic mail and even playground disk swapping. The software usually takes the form of strategy games with a strong anti-Jewish tone, one such going under the title ''Hitler Dictator''. This nasty bit of propaganda asks the player such questions as ''Should your SS carry out a crackdown on the Jews?'' and ''Do you want to put 10,000 marks and 1,000 burnable Jews into your navy?''

Thankfully, the Nazi hackers have yet to make a serious impression on the beliefs of a potentially impressionable audience, and let's hope a way is discovered to stop their fun before they do.

Charts

ATARI ST TOP TEN

1	Operation Wolf – Ocean.
2	Thunder Blade – US Gold.
3	Lombard RAC Rally.
4	Elite – Firebird.
5	Battle Chess – Elec. Arts.
6	Speed Ball – Mirrorsoft.
7	Pacmania – Grand Slam.
8	Falcon – ST.
9	TV Sports Football.
10	Sword of Sodan – Discovery.

Op Wolf takes the number one slot. Falcon should soar higher next month as it has only just gone on sale for the Amiga and therefore only enters the chart at number 8.

AMSTRAD TOP TEN

1	Operation Wolf – Ocean.
2	Thunder Blade – US Gold.
3	Robocop – Ocean.
4	Bomb Jack – Encore.
5	Yabba Dabba Doo – Bugbyte.
6	Yogi Bear – Alternative.
7	Ad. P'ball Simulator – C. Masters.
8	Big Foot – Code Masters.
9	Super Stuntman – Code Masters.
10	Air Wolf – Encore.

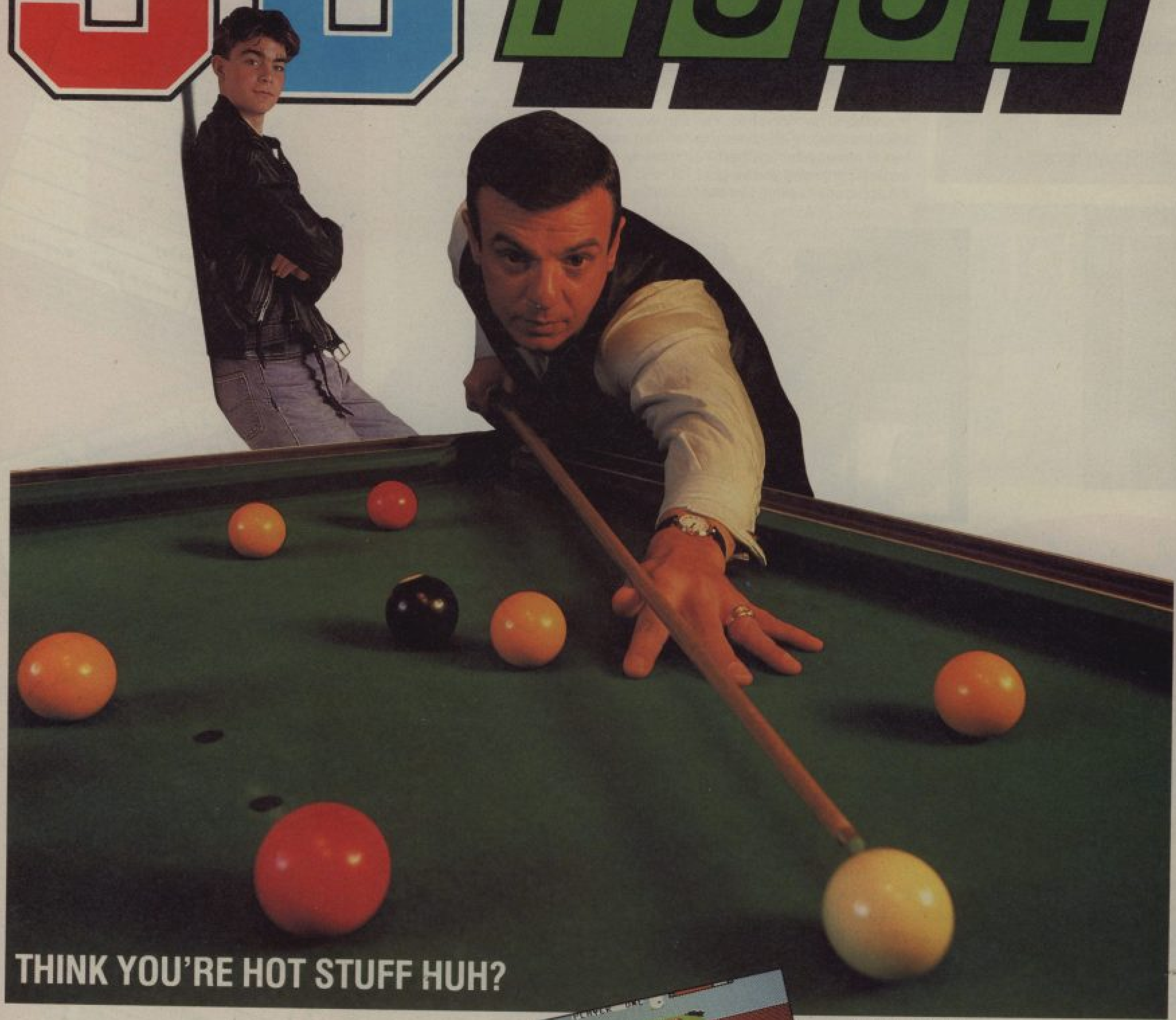
Heavy on the budget. Thats the Amstrad Top Ten – with only Op Wolf, Thunder Blade, and Robocop making it into the top ten from the full price ranks. What does it all mean?

ATARI ST/TOP TEN

1	Falcon – Mirrorsoft.
2	Thunderblade – US Gold.
3	Operation Wolf – Ocean.
4	Lombard RAC Rally – Mandarin.
5	After Burner – Activision.
6	R-Type – Electric Dreams.
7	Elite – Firebird.
8	Batman – Ocean.
9	Speed Ball – Mirrorsoft.
10	Joan of Arc – US Gold.

Falcon dominates the ST chart. Interesting to see to coin-op conversions though – perhaps ST owners aren't like the sim mad gamesters they have been painted. Truth is they like a good shot 'em up just like the rest of us.

3D POOL



Well here's your chance to prove it.

European champion 'Maltese Joe' Barbara is waiting to rack 'em up and blow you out.

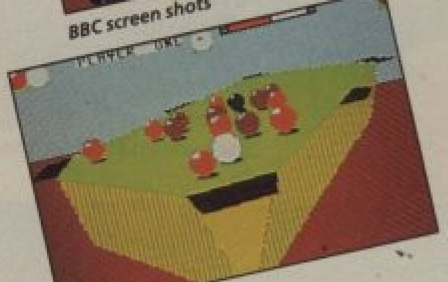
Unlike any other pool simulation, 3-D POOL incorporates a unique "move around the table" feature — allowing shots to be played from any position, just like in a real game.

3-D POOL will take all your skill to master and if you do get that lucky break, how about entering the nationwide 'Maltese Joe' high score competition with the chance to play a real frame with the champ. Full details in every box.

Cue up for a shot at big Joe.



BBC screen shots



BBC screen shots

Pocket 3-D POOL on . . .

Atari ST	£19.99
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IBM	£19.99
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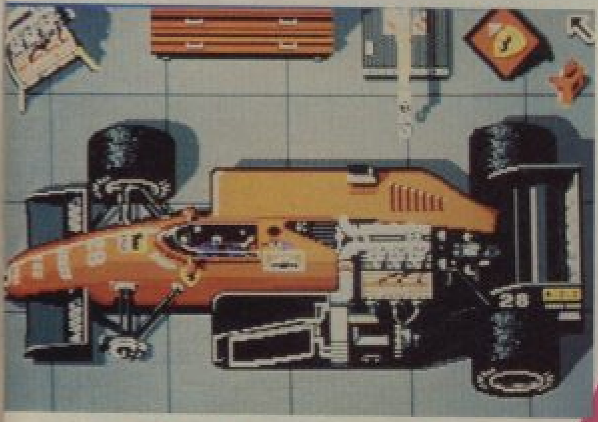
Telecomsoft, First Floor, 64-76 New Oxford St, London WC1A 1PS.

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Fax

C+VG Verboten!

We were, to say the least, a little surprised this month to find ourselves having to say "auf wiedersehen" to most of our West German readers since C+VG was placed on a list of banned publications! The reason given was that, by our advertising and reviews, we were promoting games which have been banned in the DDR because they are too violent or feature German military action in World War Two scenarios. Anyway, C+VG can still be found in Germany, but only in places well out of the reach of children, ie. between Penthouse and Mayfair on the shelves of pornographic book stores. Crikey!



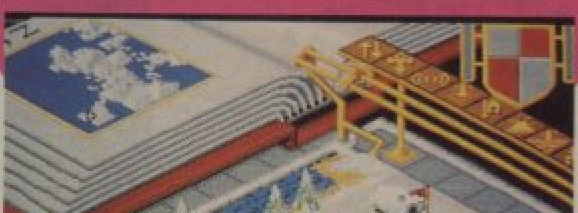
Driven to Destruction

And what's this we see on the magic FAX teleprinter . . . More news from EA . . . Frustrated racing drivers, who were even more frustrated because EA had only put Ferrari Formula One on the Amiga can feel free to sing in the street, because from March they're releasing versions for the ST, C64, Spectrum, Amstrad and PC, in that order. Anyone who's never heard of the game will be pleased to know that the game is a motor racing simulation, which, as well as putting you in the driver's seat, lets you organise a team and tune your car to optimum performance. Good, huh?

What else . . . Abrams Battle Tank puts yer average PC owner in the turret of (you guessed it) an M1A1 Abrams tank, from where you can patrol the Rhine Valley, taking part in eight missions and even a WW2 campaign. It's depicted in 3D graphics, of course, but features all kinds of whizz-bang technology, including Thermal Imaging Night Sighting and HEAT (High Explosive Anti Tank) weapons. All sounds like a far cry from Battle Zone . . .

Playing God

After their success in the scrolling shoot 'em up market with Fusion, Electronic Arts' UK "artist group", Bullfrog, have come up with this intriguing bonanza of bytes, named (after copious debating) Populous. As EA say, the game defies categorisation, but very loosely, it's a sort of strategy game in which you play a benevolent God, nurturing a race of basically nice people, building cities, developing technology and thus building your omnipotent power. Once your might has reached a certain level, you can command the elements, levelling mountains, flooding valleys and exploding volcancoes.



Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, a demon is creating his own race of people, a nasty bunch whose intentions are purely dishonourable, and under his command they are to conquer all comers. You realise, of course, this means war, and only your divine power and leadership can stop the forces of darkness.

Populous is fully deserving of the term "feature-packed", and as well as featuring a neat 3D display, digitised sound effects, monsters and the ability to create your own environment before you start playing, you can even play head to head with another Amiga or ST owner via a datalink or MODEM. Hoo-wee! We've seen it and it's looking good. Full reviews next ish.

Charts

ALL FORMATS TOP TEN

1	Operation Wolf – Ocean.
2	Robocop – Ocean.
3	After Burner – Activision.
4	Thunder Blade – US Gold.
5	Bomb Jack – Encore.
6	Ace 2 – Cascade.
7	D. Dragon – Melbourne House.
8	Joe Blade 2 – Players.
9	Batman – Ocean.
10	Commando – Encore.

Christmas has been and gone but Ocean's yuletide smashes are still riding high. Nothing new in the charts this month. Dullsville.

SPECTRUM TOP TEN

1	Robocop – Ocean.
2	Afterburner – Activision.
3	Operation Wolf – Ocean.
4	Thunder Blade – US Gold.
5	F'mula Grand Prix – Alternative.
6	Ace 2 – Cascade.
7	Knightmare – Mastertronic.
8	Skooldaze – Alternative.
9	Through the Trap Door – Alt.
10	Back to Skool – Alt.

Robocop still shoots the competition out of sight in the Speccy chart. Strong showings for various re-releases at the foot of the Top Ten.

COMMODORE 64

1	Robocop – Ocean.
2	Afterburner – Activision.
3	Microprose Socc. – M'prose.
4	D. Dragon – Mel. House.
5	Operation Wolf – Ocean.
6	Thunder Blade – US Gold.
7	Bomb Jack – Encore.
8	Pro Ski Sim. – C. Masters.
9	Ace 2 – Cascade.
10	Ace – Cascade.

Just when we thought you had no taste at all – with the likes of Double Dragon in the Top Ten – you surprise us by purchasing Microprose Soccer into the charts. Nice one.

Fax

Crown still being Defended



Tanks a lot



The first in Domark's series of Tengen licenses due for release soon is the scrolling tank shoot 'em up, *Vindicators*. You and a partner take your little tanks through fourteen heavily defended space stations, knocking out gun emplacements, mines and, of course, enemy tanks. Like all the best blasters these days, *Vindicators* has facilities for customising your fighting machine with such wonders as speedups, extra armour, bomb cannons and smart missiles.

All the conversions are being programmed by Consult Computer Systems, who worked on the *Return of the Jedi* license, and judging by our screenshots they have exercised a little artistic license, providing a radar scanner on the Amstrad version, and some slightly altered graphics on the ST game. Still, hopes are high in the C+VG office, especially those of a certain Julian Rignall, who claims the world record on the coin-op. Quote: "I can't wait!": unquote. Thanks Jaz.



Zappy Snaps

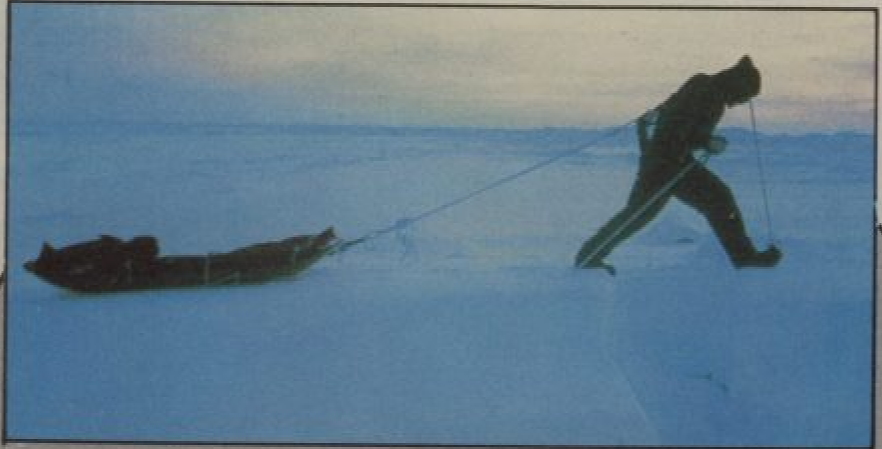
This little baby is the Canon Zap Shot, a revolutionary new camera which has just been launched in America. Instead of forcing the amateur David Bailey to fumble with his film, the Zap Shot stores up to fifty images on a special video floppy disk, just over two inches square. So how do you view your pics? Just plug the camera into your TV and you can flick through the disk-based album at your leisure. Then, when you're tired of your old photos, just wipe the disk and start again.

The fact that the pictures are stored digitally also means that, if you have the necessary hardware, you can fiddle around with them and use them in home video productions, print personal messages on them, or even print them out in full colour! The Zap Shot is priced at around $200 in the USA, which should translate to just over £100 when it gets over here. The C+VG camera klutz squad just can't wait.

If you thought *Defender of the Crown* was the bees knees on the Amiga/ST/64, you might be interested to know that it has just been put onto CD-ROM, turning it into a truly cinematic experience. If you have the right hardware (an MS-DOS PC and of course a CD-ROM player) you can stereophonic soundtrack, film-quality sound effects and even spoken dialogue! Forsooth, and other medieval oaths! As ever, quality comes at a price, and after shelling out much moolah for your PC – CD combo, the disk will set you back £49.95.

Anyone with a smaller bank account and a Nintendo might be cheered by news from the CES show that Ultra games are releasing *D of the C* on cartridge. Of course, it'll only be available in the States for a while, but who knows what the future may bring? Not us, alas, but if Britain continues to become a rising console marketplace, there is a chance that this and some even more exciting foreign titles will reach these shores by the end of the year. Keep checking Mean Machines for the latest news!

Virgin's Arctic Antics



Would you have the skill, judgement and thermal underwear to get you and a team of explorers to the North Pole? Well, if you have access to a BBC Domesday System (a BBC Micro connected to a video disc player) you can find out with Virgin's North Polar Expedition package. It comprises a video disc, computer software and a set of manuals and maps to brief up to five "explorers", each of whom have different roles on the expedition. The computer thinks up problems for the team to solve, illustrating them with scenes from the video disc, which contains stills and film footage from Sir Ranulph Fiennes' 1979-82 expedition. What more could a budding Arctic adventurer ask? The package is aimed at students of Geography and Social Studies and, as such, is priced at a sizeable £199. Interested tutors can get further information from Virgin on 01-727 8070.

Jack Jack-Jacket your Body

What are these funky fashion-mongers looking so pleased about? Why, their jackets of course! No ordinary jackets are these, however, for they are Safe and Sound Stereo Jackets, branded "The Sociable Stereo" by its manufacturers. Plug in your Walkman and listen to the sounds flowing out of each lapel! Apparently it creates a natural stereo crossover effect and in tests, 30% of the people tested prefer this concept over headphones. The survey fails to record the opinions of those people sitting next to the wearers on the train.

And it doesn't stop there! The manufacturers, Sport Electronics Inc., are also flogging Safe and Sound neckrests, sweatshirts and headrests to headphone-weary punters. Only in America . . .



Sony get it on Tape



It had to happen . . . The elite trend setters over in the USA have finally run out of ideas, and in a fit of desperation have turned their designer minds to . . . blank video tapes! Sony is the purveyor of the cassettes, currently only available in America (but bound to wind up here sooner or later), and they come in two easy-to-rewind flavours. For the kids to record those really exciting episodes of The Care Bears there are Video Pops, 120 minute tapes done out in "fun colours" such as "peach" and "blue". Alternatively, soap buffs can pick up a five-pack (carrying handle included) labelled Video Soaps, upon which a week's supply of soap can be recorded, put in boxes with colour-coded lids and stored forever, providing a source of eternal joy and saving the world from the peril of the Greenhouse Effect. Yeah, well . . .


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YOUR SINCLAIR – "So another spanker from Imagine. You'll be a fool if you miss it!"
c. TAITO CORP. 1987
SLAPFIGHT
COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES – "Simple. Smooth. Very addictive. A winner."
ZZAP "A superb arcade conversion and a great shoot 'em up. This is one for the ZAPPERS collection."
c. TAITO CORP. 1988
RENEGADE
COMMODORE USER – "As conversions go this still takes some beating – literally and metaphorically."
YOUR SINCLAIR – "The graphics are so slick you really feel you're part of an action movie rather than just playing a game."
c. TAITO CORP. 1987
ARKANOID
ZZAP 64 – "I thoroughly recommend Arkanoid – for the simple reason that it's simply gorgeous playing with it."
COMPUTER GAMES WEEK – "The take home message is simple. You want a great arcade game?"
JUMP!
c. TAITO CORP. 1987
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C+VG REVIEWS



EUGENE 'EUGE' LACEY
Man of the people, and housewife's choice, Euge has years of experience behind him. He's a shoot 'em up and arcade adventure fiend, but doesn't say no to a good RPG.
FAVE GAMES: Bomber Raid, Space Harrier (PC Engine), War in Middle Earth.



JULIAN 'JAZ' RIGNALL
Incurable arcade junkie who also owns just about every computer and games console going. If he's not wandering around the Brighton arcades, he's usually found at home playing the latest shoot 'em up or arcade adventure.
FAVE GAMES: Andes Attack, Dragon Spirit (PC Engine), Cyberball (Arcades).



CIARAN 'BRENNAN' BRENNAN
Ciaran is an intellectual from the Emerad Isle who enjoys all manner of computer games, as long as they're good ones. He's an ST and Amiga owner, but doesn't say no to an enjoyable 8-bit blast.
FAVE GAMES: Falcon, Hybris, Atomic Robo Kid (Arcades).



PAUL 'WHY AYE' GLANCEY
C+VG's token Geordie, Paul is an avid player of arcade adventures, puzzle games, and any shoot 'em up which requires a little bit of thought as well as joystick prowess.
FAVE GAMES: Alien Crush (PC Engine), Wec Le Mans, Battlehawks.



TONY 'DILDOID' DILLON
Tony's our resident heavy metal fan who would like nothing more than to write for Kerrang! Still, at the moment he just has to make do reviewing RPGs, sports simulations and arcade games – which he does enjoy immensely.
FAVE GAMES: Pro Football, War in Middle Earth, Wec Le Mans.





OTHERS





Reviews

BLASTE

► SUPPLIER: IMAGE WORKS.
► PRICE: SPEC/AMS/C64/MSX £9.99 CASS, C64 £12.99 DISK, SPEC/AMS/MSX £14.99 DISK, ST/AMIGA £19.99.
► REVIEWER: JULIAN RIGNALL.

Blasteroids' roots go all the way back to 1979 to a video game called, surprisingly enough, *Asteroids*. It was acually quite innovative for the time, taking the left/right/thrust/fire/ hyperspace controls of the earlier vector graphic game *Space Wars* and putting the player in the middle of an asteroid storm. The objective was simple: blast the rocks and occasional space ship (know affectionately as "eggies" because of their shape) and survive.

The 1988 version (the machine appeared last year) follows a similar concept, but adds nearly a decade's worth of new technology to breathe new life into the ageing format.

One of the major changes is the addition of a one or two-player option, allowing a team of prospective rock wreckers to battle together. The rocks in question are colourful bits of debris that break down under fire twice, each part getting smaller until it's tiny enough to vaporise.

Destroying rocks is the key issue, because if one strikes the ship its shield, represented at the top of the screen by a diminishing bar, shrinks towards a fatal zero. The player(s) start with three credits, effectively giving three lives.

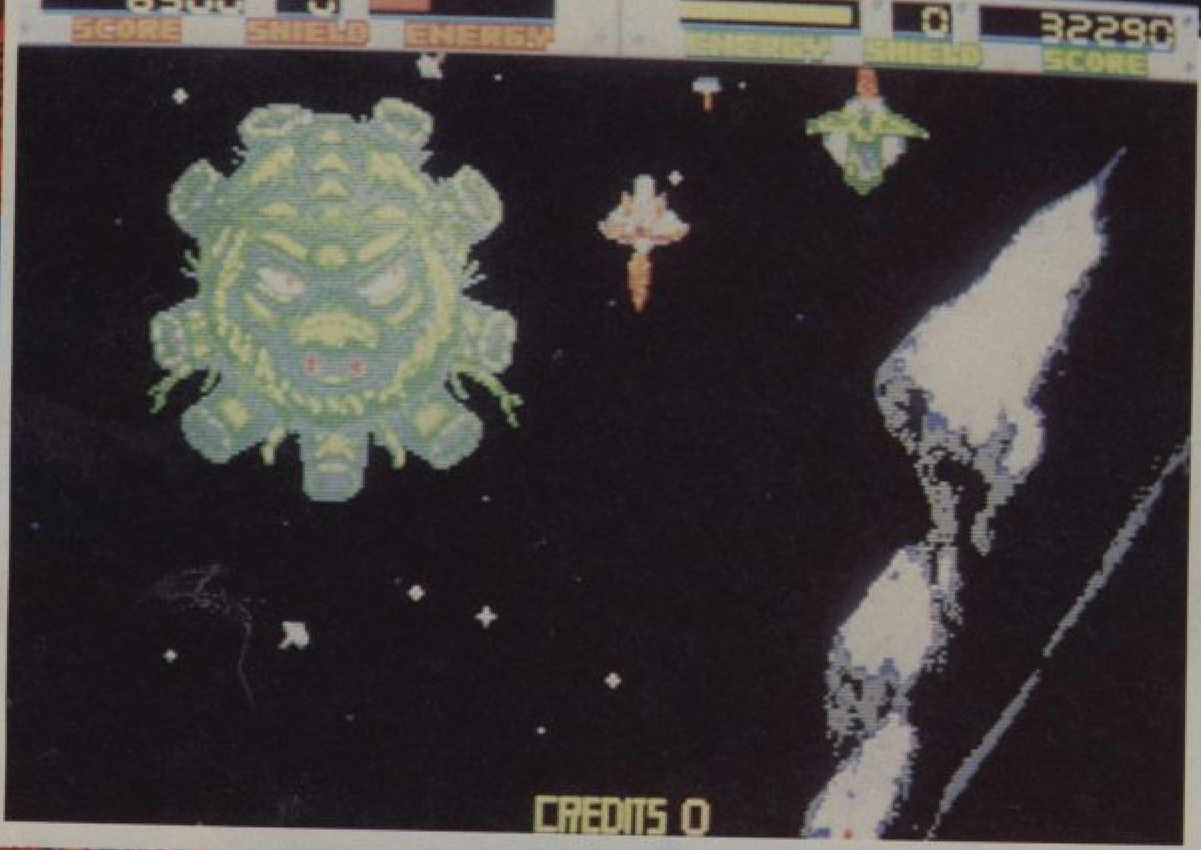
The ships are the apex in



▼ Hello! I'm Mucor the bogeyman.

▼ Spectrum select screen.







BLA

C+VG HIT!

EROIDS



▲ *The action hots up.*



▲ *Whizz into the exit portal.*

space bouler demolition hardware, and are capable of transforming into three different sizes. Small ships are very maneovrable, but suffer from low shield and firepower. Medium ships have heavy firepower, but medium speed and shields, while large ships are slow and have medium firepower, but are well-shielded.

In two-player mode the two ships can join together – one player controls the large and manoevrable main ship while the other takes control of a gun turret at the top. It's an unusual feature, and one which I found very enjoyable (as well as argument-inducing if you've got an idiot in control of the main ship!)

At the start of a game one of four difficulty levels is chosen: normal, medium, hard or expert. Bonus points are given if the player elects to start on a higher level. The action then begins with the ships being placed in the first asteroid storm, and the blasting starts.

There are several different kinds of rocks. Grey ones simply vaporise when shot, while red ones drop glowing energy crystals which are picked up to replenish shield levels. Later on blue popcorn asteroids appear and drift around the screen until they're shot four times, whereupon they stop and

▼ *Fat ship.*



▼ *Hello again! I'm a Spectrum Mucor.*



ASTEROIDS



OPERATION NEPTUNE







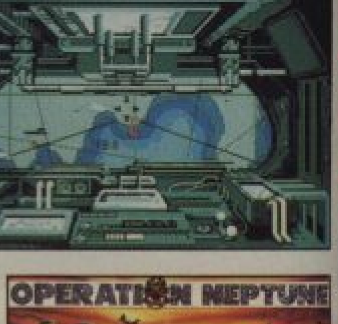


The tranquil surface of the Pacific Ocean belies the battle of wits taking place in the world's last unexplored territory. A perfect hiding-place for a determined enemy, or is it? Your jet-bike and technologically advanced bathyscaphe should help, but there are still the enemy bases to destroy, lines of communication to be knocked out, and the natural predators of the deep just waiting for a tasty snack at the first sniff of blood! So check your oxygen supply, and dive, dive, dive...

Atari ST, PC, Amiga £24.95
CBM64, Amstrad £14.95 (disk), £9.95 (tape)

INFOGRAMES, MITRE HOUSE, ABBEY ROAD, ENFIELD, MIDDLESEX, EN1 2RQ.

INFOGRAMES



BLASTEROIDS

Reviews

C+VG HIT!



▲ *Action-packed.*

form an unmovable obstacle. The final asteroid type is a geodesic, which homes in on the ship when shot, forcing the player to take evasive action and blast it again and destroy it before it hits home.

When a screen is cleared of rocks, an exit portal appears, which the ships fly into to take them to the main menu where another screen is selected.

As the players progress further into the game, alien space ships enter the fray and attempt to shoot down the ships, or simply crash into them and damage their shields. Fortunately they can be shot, and sometimes a power-up item is dropped, which can be collected to add an extra feature to the ship. Such goodies include extra shield energy capacity, double shot power, magnets (which attract energy crystals), shields (which give the ship extra protection), extra hit power, speed-up, ripstar (a sort of smart bomb) and cloak.

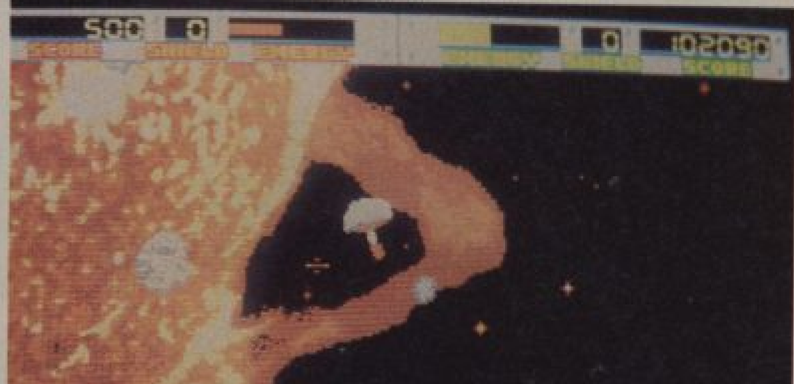
Occasionally space leeches are discovered. These horrors reside in eggs and are released when the shell is shot, whereupon they head directly for the ship and attempt to attach themselves to the outer hull and suck its shield energy dry. Naturally, the onus is on blasting them before they get close.



▲ *Geodesic asteroids are in evidence.*

When 16 screens are cleared, Mucor appears. He's a giant green alien who marauds around the screen, shooting out tiny aliens from his nodules and trying his utmost to bash the ships, which diminishes shields considerably. The only way to destroy him is by blasting his nodules, which requires repeated and accurate fire. When he's destroyed it's off to a tougher set of asteroid fields populated by an even more aggressive group of aliens.

Being a great fan of the coin-op, I've been eagerly awaiting this for some time, and I'm glad to say the wait has been worth it. The ST version is brilliant, and fully captures the spirit and frantic action of the original machine. All the features of the coin-op have been incorporated, and I mean ALL of them, and the game plays in exactly the same way, so



▲ *Two players joined together.*

BLASTEROIDS

BLASTEROIDS

arcade players can use all of their favourite tactics.

The only disappointments are the gaudy backdrops (the sprites are excellent, though) and the mediocre sound. But I suppose you can't have everything. Still, the gameplay is adrenalin pumping, and *Blasteroids* is easily the best ST shoot 'em up to date.

Spectrum owners are also in for a treat. That too has all the features of the original, and even if the gameplay is a little on the slow side, it's still very playable, especially in two-player mode.

Blasteroids is superb on both the ST and Spectrum – hopefully future Image Works arcade conversions will be of similar high quality.

ST		SPECTRUM	
► GRAPHICS	81%	► GRAPHICS	80%
► SOUND	53%	► SOUND	82%
► VALUE	82%	► VALUE	84%
► PLAYABILITY	93%	► PLAYABILITY	84%
► **OVERALL**	**90%**	► **OVERALL**	**87%**





UPDATE . . .

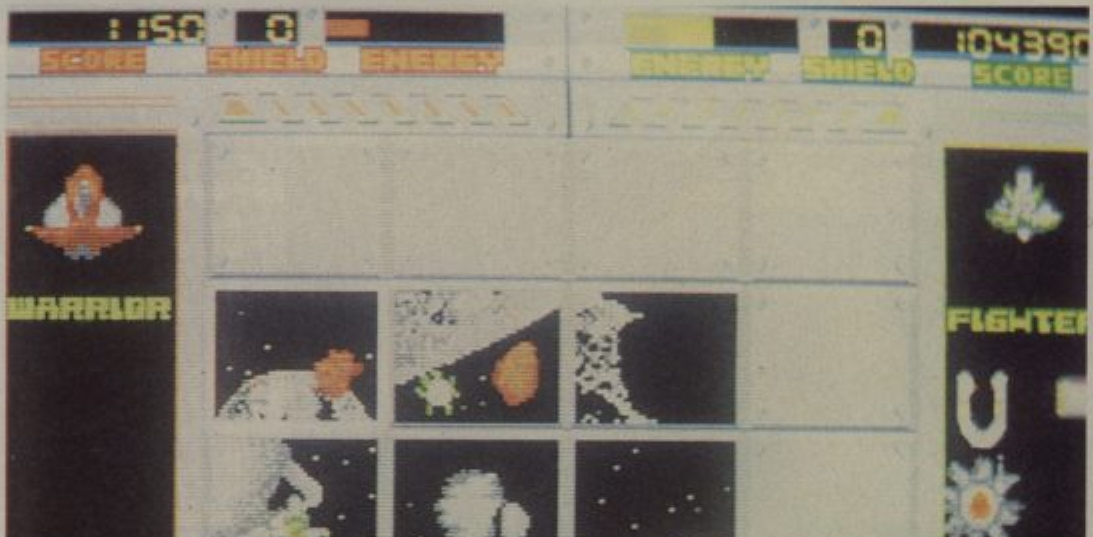
The Amiga version has been written from scratch and looks and sounds identical to the coin-op, as well as being as playable as the ST incarnation. It's definitely one to look out for.

C64 and Amstrad owners should be able to buy *Blasteroids* shortly, and judging by the quality of the two reviewed here, they should be excellent – try them out.

COMPETITION

Have you just been gazing wistfully at those gorgeous ST screenshots of Blasteroids, thinking, "if only I had an ST, I could play it and be happy for the rest of my life"? Well, gadzooks, lawks-o-lawdy – here's your chance to win one of those wonder machines, to have and to hold, to love and to cherish in sickness and in health until death do you part (or until you flog it for the next mega-machine), and a copy of Blasteroids to play on it.

So what do you have to do to win this marvel of modern technology? Well, it's easy peasy. All we want you to do is gather your pens, pencils and crayons (or even finger paints if you want), and draw us a picture of Mucor's big brother. Mucor is pictured a few times in the Blasteroids review, so you've got no excuse of not knowing what he looks like. You can let your imagination run riot – what we want is an original and tewwifyingly fwightening monster that we can scare Paul with. He can big, small, round, square, have sixteen legs, large fangs . . . he can even look like Garry Williams! So get your drawing shoes on and get painting.



Send your pictures to: EEEK! A FWIGHTENING CWEATURE COMP, C+VG, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU. The closing date is March 17, and we'll be showing the winning entries in a future issue. Ooh-ooH! What a tomato!



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Reviews

► SUPPLIER: OCEAN.
► PRICES:
SPECTRUM/C64/AMS
£9.95 CASSETTE/£14.95 DISK,
ST £19.95, AMIGA £24.95.
► REVIEWER: PAUL GLANCEY.

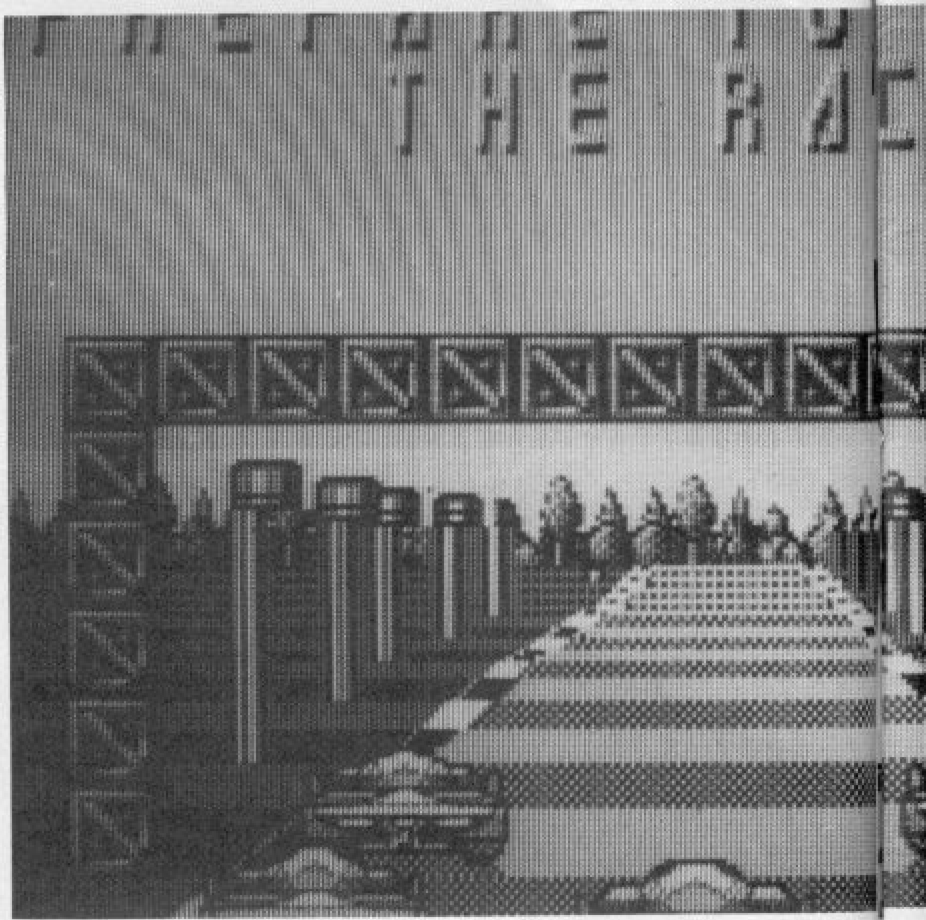
WEC LE MA

The summer of '87 brought something of a revival for driving games in British arcades. The most popular of them all was the immensely successful *Out Run*, and following close behind was *Wec Le Mans*, with its unusual rotating cockpit giving new meaning to the term "going for a spin".

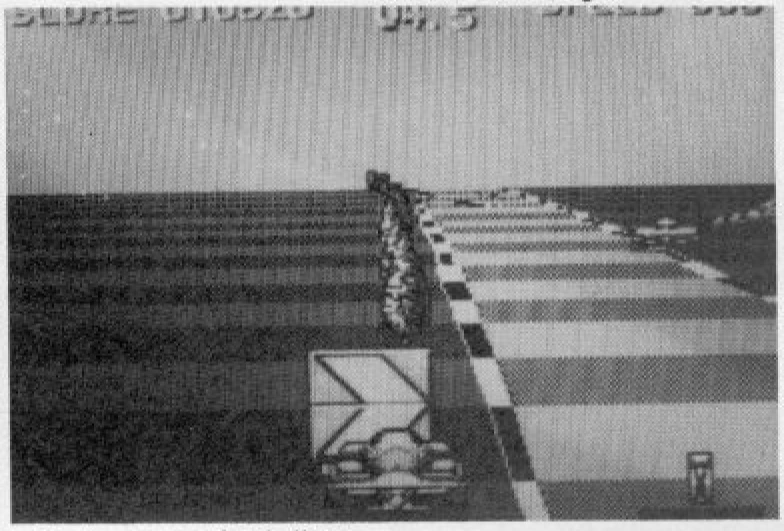
Unsurprisingly for a game called *Wec Le Mans*, you, the hapless player are strapped in a car on the starting grid of the 24 hour Le Mans road race. Your auto is ably kitted out with an accelerator (always handy if you want to go *really* fast), a brake (always handy if you're already going *really* fast), a speedometer (so you know whether or not you're going *really* fast), and low and high gear shift (to get you from fast to *really* fast and back again). Controlling the game via joystick or keyboard is very satisfactory, because the longer you hold the steering, the greater the lock put on the steering wheel, as a gauge at the bottom of the screen shows.

The track runs between three checkpoints, and you have to beat the clock to the next one or retire to the pits in disgrace. Seeking to foil your speedy ambitions are a host of other cars which dodge and weave across the track, crashing into one another, bursting into flames and generally making the going difficult for safe drivers like you.

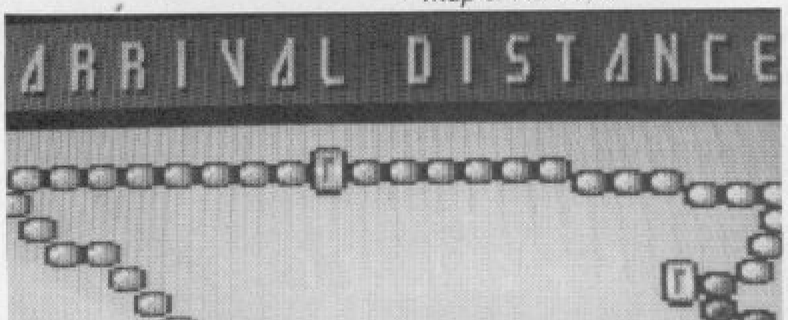
To make a twisty, turny, bumpy track even more dangerous, signboards, lamp posts and other



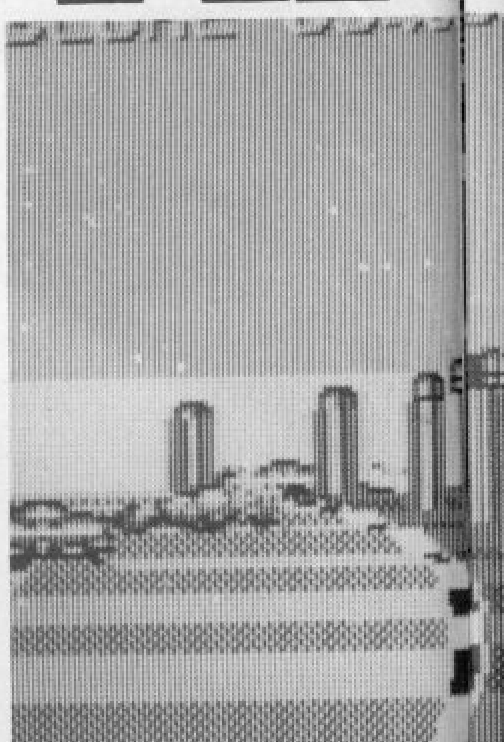
▲ On the starting grid.

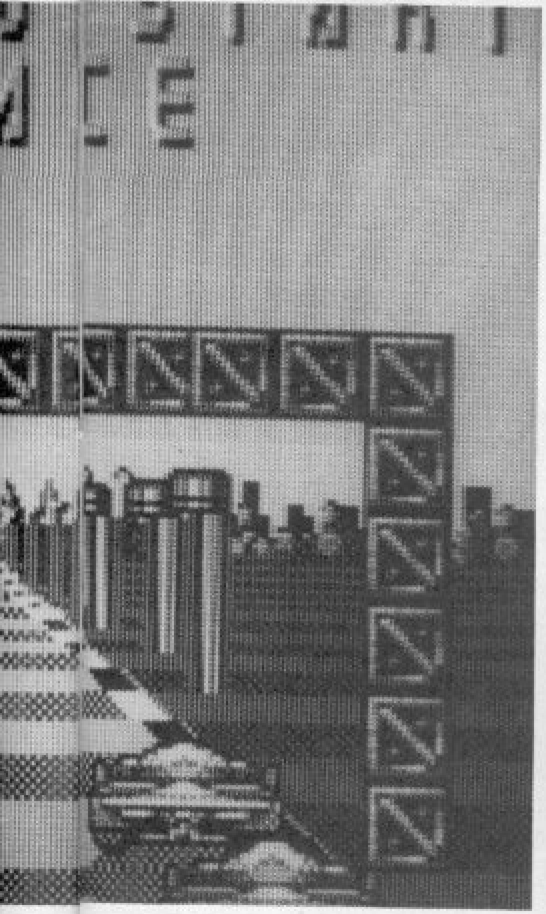


No garlands for Glancey as he ▼ smashes into a sign.



▼ Map of the track



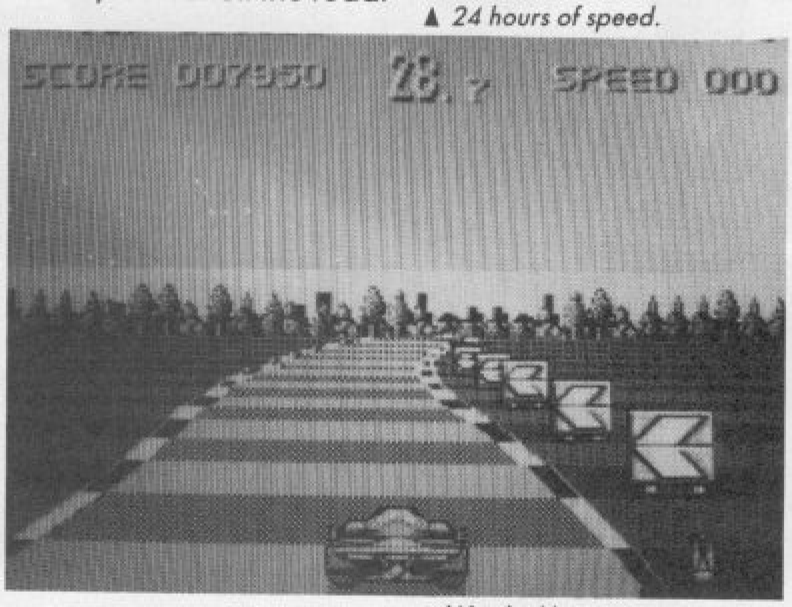


ANS

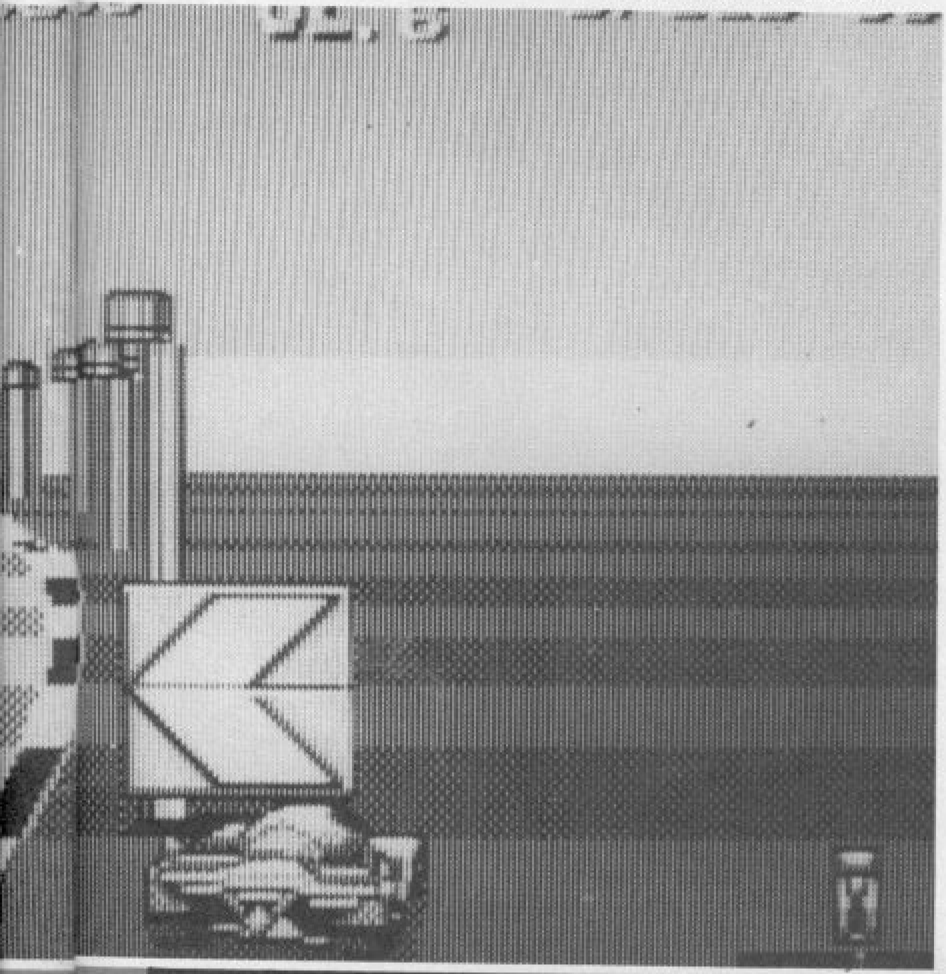
trackside obstacles lie in wait for the reckless driver, who tries to skid his way through corners at top speed, instead of braking. Unfortunately, breaking is exactly what your car does after a crash has hurled it twenty feet into the air and fifty yards down the track – a sure-fire way to lose time and the race. As the race progresses the track becomes more and more crowded with backmarkers, who like nothing better than crashing into each other and taking you with them as they career off the road.



▲ *24 hours of speed.*



▲ *Wec Le Mans – great racer.*



▼ *Spinning out on the bend.*

And that's it really, just what you'd expect from a motor racing simulation, oh, except to say that this one is really good. The track graphics are a teensy bit jerky, but the 3D effect they create is fast and convincing enough, and the car sprites follow the dips and curves in the road perfectly. Apart from the bouncy tunes and jingles the game sounds are limited to the tinny buzz of the engine, which grows irritating as the race goes on, but serves its purpose of indicating when to change up a gear.

Gameplay is as fast as you could hope, and challenging too. After a day's concerted effort I was on the brink of getting onto the third lap but after that the number of the cars on the track and the incredibly tight time limit proved impossible to beat.

Being unable to beat the game is no reason for me to bear it a grudge, though. Indeed, this is one of the most elegant race games I've seen on any computer lately, and it's certainly the best I've played on the Amstrad.

The Spectrum version is of similar high quality and the game doesn't seem to lack anything in spite of the machine's graphical and audio shortcomings. Strange, isn't it, how well driving games translate to the old Speccy?

On these two machines at least, this has to be one of the best arcade conversions going. Test drive it today.

AMSTRAD	
► GRAPHICS	82%
► SOUND	68%
► PLAYABILITY	84%
► VALUE	80%
► **OVERALL**	**82%**

SPECTRUM	
► GRAPHICS	88%
► SOUND	81%
► PLAYABILITY	85%
► VALUE	80%
► **OVERALL**	**83%**

UPDATE . . .

The C64 version is a bit of an unknown quantity and we have yet to see anything on that particular game. The 16-bit conversions, due later on in the spring should be up to scratch, certainly in the graphics and sound departments.



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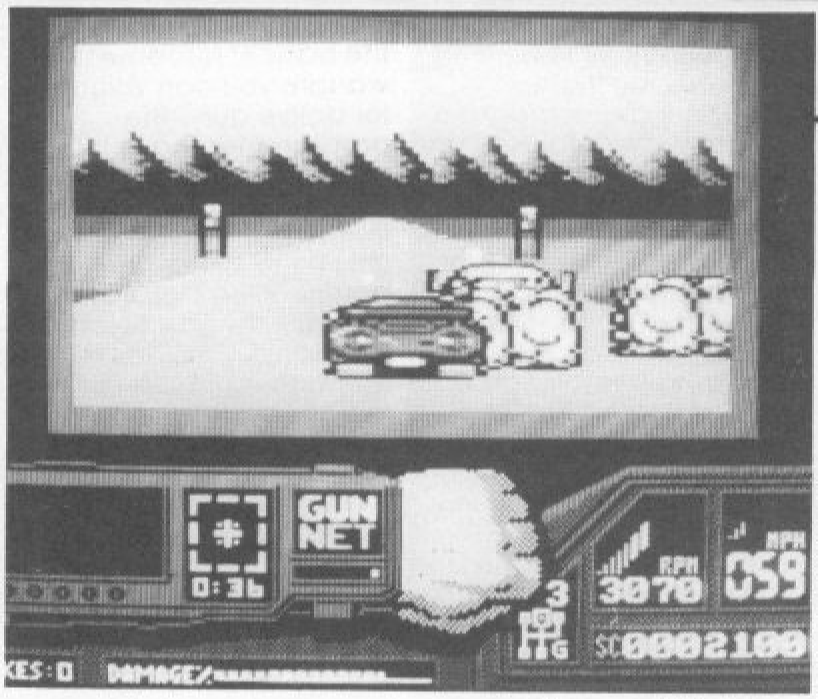
TECHNO COP

► **SUPPLIER: GREMLIN.**
► **PRICE: SPEC £7.99 CASS, AMS?C64 £9.99 CASS, ST/AMIGA/IBM PC £19.99.**
► **REVIEWER: CIARAN BRENNAN.**

The future is going to be a very bleak place if games designers have anything to do with it. If they're not predicting a post-holocaust breakdown of civilisaiton, they're warning of a pre-holocaust breakdown of civilisation . . . not much to choose between them really.

The latest future shock from Gremlin sees the player become an enforcer – a part bionic member of an elite police squad. The squad's main enemy is a gang of villains known as the Dean On Arrival gang (DOAs) and with the help of a turbo-charged VMAS vehicle, a magnum pistol, a villain-tracking radar and a net gun (for capturing those villains you might have a good reason not to kill) it's your job to go and round these characters up one by one.

But enough of this scene-setting – let's get on with the bloodshed. That's right – bloodshed, for despite the plot's search and capture nature, this game is only about driving fast and blowing your enemies into a pile of twitching offal.



▲ *Road Blasters-style blasting.*

This may not be the first ever game to feature graphic bloodshed, but it's certainly the most vivid. If computer games were rated in the same way that films are, this would certainly receive an 18.

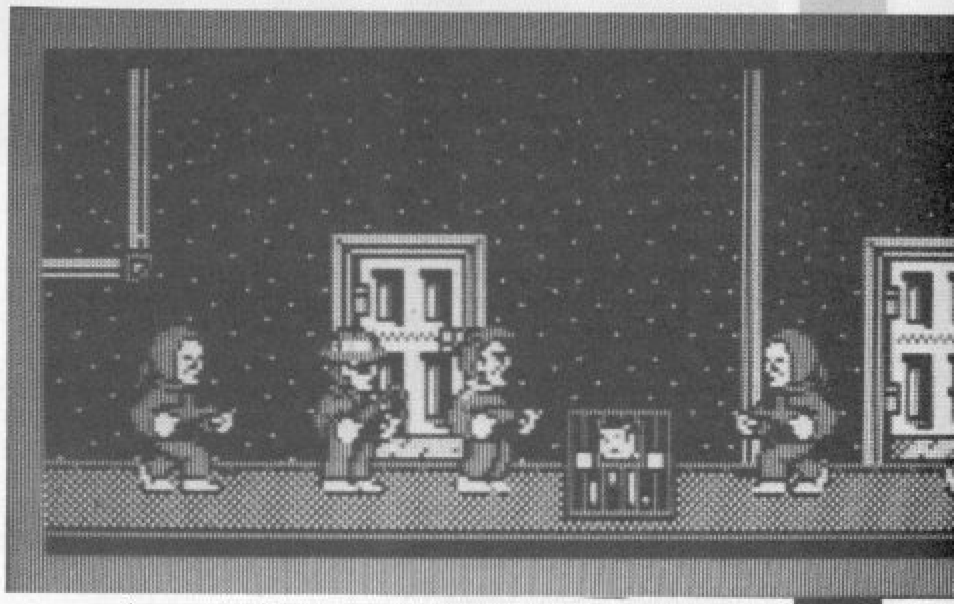
The first section puts the player behind the wheel of the VMAX, simply driving along the road waiting for a crime to be reported on the police radio. The DOAs are also out for a spin, so in true Road Blasters style it's up to you to 'put up or shut up' by either blowing their vehicles to oblivion with your roof-mounted cannon or knocking them off the road.

As soon as a message comes through, it's off to the scene of the crime and out of the car for a spot of pedestrianised searching. The crimes usually take place in multi-storey lifts populated by gangs of gun-toting and whip-cracking villains. Follow your wrist mounted radar to find the suspect and then deal with him according to your orders.

The ultimate objective is to rise from the position of Rookie through the ranks of the enforcers to eventually become top dog. Acting according to orders is all that's needed to achieve this, while going against the grain can see you remain a rookie for quite some time.

What all of this basically amounts to is two games – one a road-racing shoot 'em up, the other a *Rolling Thunder* style scroller. Neither game is particularly stunning in its own right, but coupled together they just about add up to an enjoyable package – but did it really have to be this violent?

▼ *Search the buildings – waste the villains.*





► *Kaboom – a villain's car is vapourised.*

AMIGA

► GRAPHICS	71%
► SOUND	73%
► VALUE	71%
► PLAYABILITY	79%
► **OVERALL**	**69%**

AMSTRAD

► GRAPHICS	73%
► SOUND	69%
► VALUE	75%
► PLAYABILITY	79%
► **OVERALL**	**71%**

UPDATE . . .

All versions are currently available.

Reviews

► SUPPLIER: US GOLD/LUCASFILM.
► PRICE: PC/AMIGA/ST £24.99.
► REVIEWER: PAUL GLANCEY.

BATTLEHAW

After achieving success with their beautiful, but ultimately vacuous, 3D fractal graphic games *(Rescue on Fractalus, Koronis Rift* and *The Eidolon),* Lucasfilm seemed to drop the technique that had become their trademark and began venturing down two new avenues. Their subsequent releases have been wacky RPGs *(Maniac Mansion* and *Zak McKracken)* and naval warfare simulations.

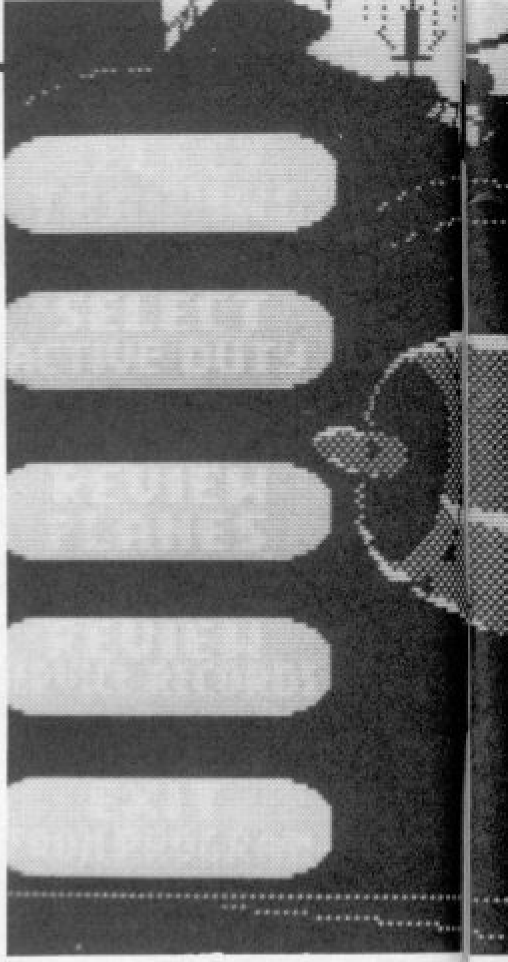
Battlehawks 1942 is one of the latter, though unlike its more contemporary predecessors, *PHM Pegasus* and *Strike Fleet,* this puts you in the pilot's seat of an aircraft fighting it out over the Pacific during World War Two. Having said that, I should add that this isn't strictly to be classed as a flight simulator as the program dispenses with take off and landing procedures and keeps the controls as simple as possible (without compromising too much on realism). Instead, *Battlehawks* concentrates on the techniques of bombing aircraft carriers, torpedoing cruisers and gunning down attacking fighters.

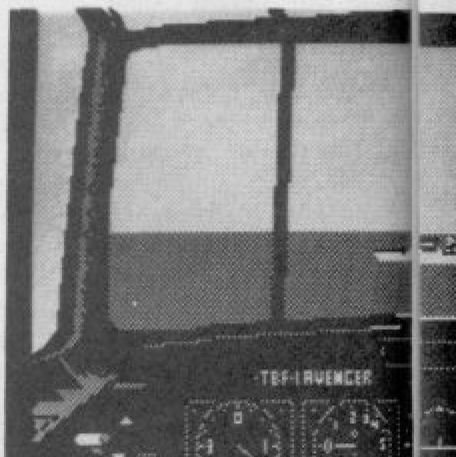
If you feel your skills in these areas are a little rusty, you can start the ball rolling by selecting the training option from the opening screen. This doesn't just give you one mission to fly, but 13: intercept and fighter escort missions providing gunnery practice, dive bombing missions and torpedo runs. Each flight is given a difficulty designation, the easier ones featuring non-manoeuvring targets and the toughest simulating true combat conditions. The way each is played can be altered further by selecting enemy skill levels, limitations of fuel, ammunition and armour, and even which plane you'll be flying and for which side (Japanese or American).

Once you've mastered the basis of airborne warfare you can volunteer for active duty. The programmers have tried to recreate the conditions of four of the major battles fought in the Pacific theatre in 1942 – the battles of the Coral Sea, Midway, the East Solomons and Santa Cruz. Each scenario is played out in four separate missions, all of which vary in difficulty from easy to "impossible?"

When you've decided where, how and with whom you want to fly you can at last get your aircrew in gear. You start your mission on approach to the target, with the screen showing the standard array of gauges below a pilot's eye view of the ocean and its occupants. Different keyboard controls select forward, left, right, downward and rear views, the latter acting as the tail gunner's view if the plane you selected has one. The view of your environment is, to be honest, a pretty bland one, showing just the sea and the sky without clouds or waves. Cosmetic points like this don't matter much, though, as the active air ace has little time to admire the scenery. The "sprites" representing the other aircraft and the ships are very well-drawn though, making the various types of each easily distinguishable, and from all angles too.

As soon as you begin to close on the enemy vessel, the sky is filled with ack-ack fire and hostile aircraft doing their darndest to make you an ex-pilot. Expect enemy planes to perform realistic offensive and defensive manoeuvres, such as Immelman turns and

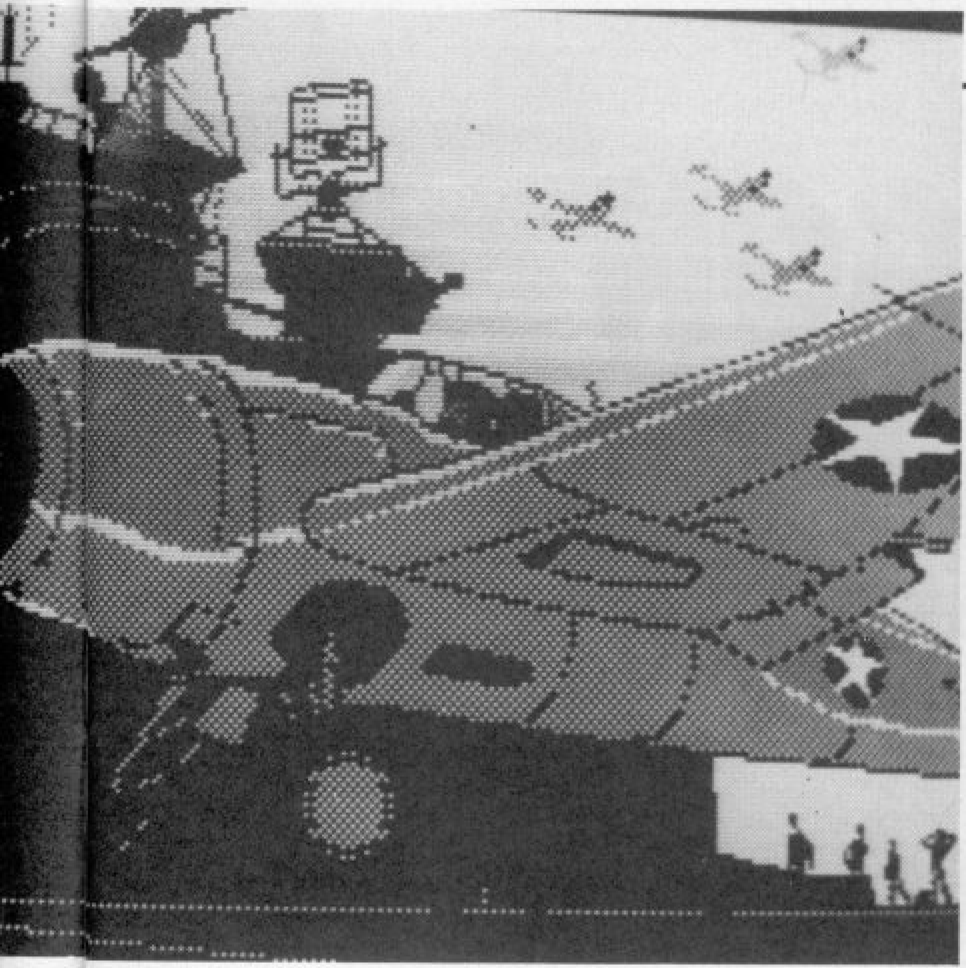




▲ *Our gunner gets an enemy gun boat in his s*

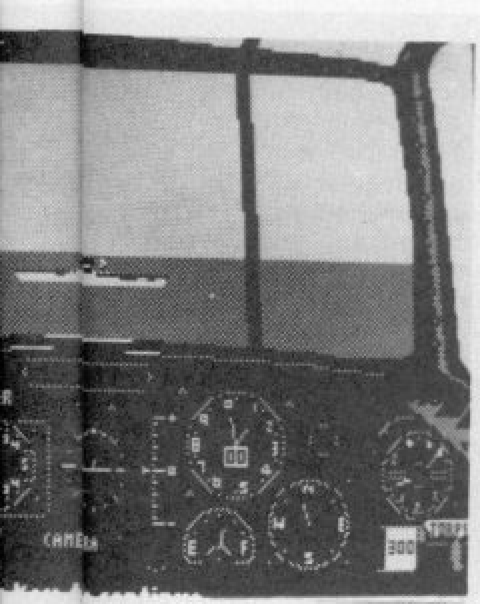
▼ *The mission briefing screen.*





▲ *Choose your mission.*

VKS

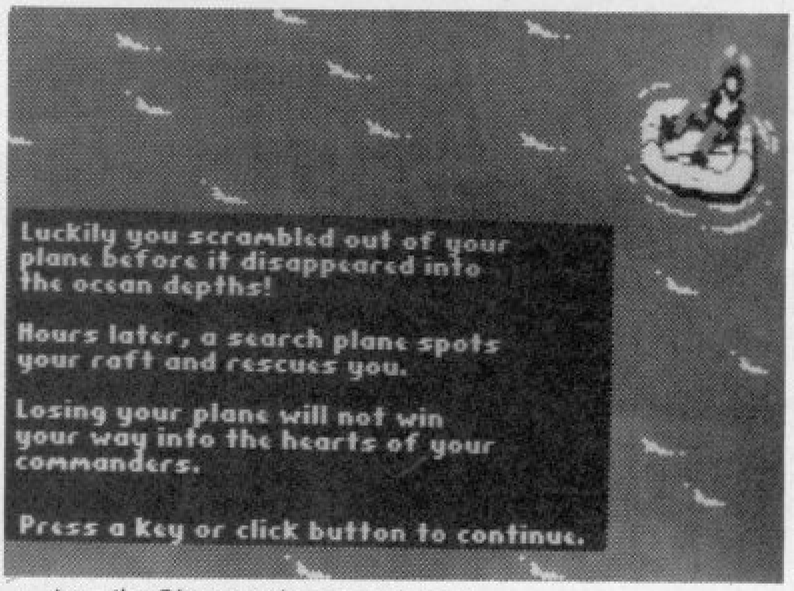


oat in his sights.

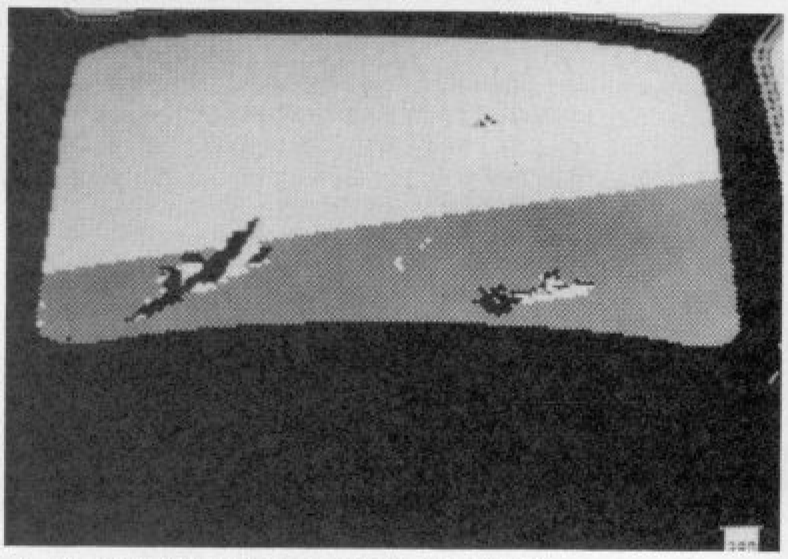
Split-S, and Japanese Zero pilots are programmed to take advantage of their aircraft's extra speed and agility to perform dogfighting feats which the American planes are incapable of.

The intelligence of the enemy, and the slightly sluggish controls on the PC version I played make it pretty tough to shoot anything down unless you spend a while practising deflection shooting and "leading" the target. When you do, though, it's very satisfying to watch your enemy plummetting downwards, a plume of smoke billowing from his engine, and sometimes a parachute lifting the pilot to safety before the plane splashes into the water. It's almost as satisfying to eject from your own stricken plane, because you get such a terrific view of your surroundings as you drift downwards, with enemy aircraft whizzing past your head, and the battle continuing around you.

The realism and attention to authenticity make this a very atmospheric and enjoyable game to spend an afternoon playing, even if you're not a fan of flying games or a period warfare buff. The excellent manual covers the fundamentals of flight and air combat, details the specifications and evaluates each type of aircraft and each warship which features in the game, and provides maps and commentaries on the four battles included. This typically high standard of Lucasfilm presentation also makes it's presence felt in the extensive and easy to use game selection and briefing menus which form such an essential part of the simulation. I didn't find it quite as compelling as *Strike Fleet*, but it kept me engrossed for many an hour. If you've got a PC and want a diversion from Lotus laffs and word-processing wheezes, this is definitely one to look out for.

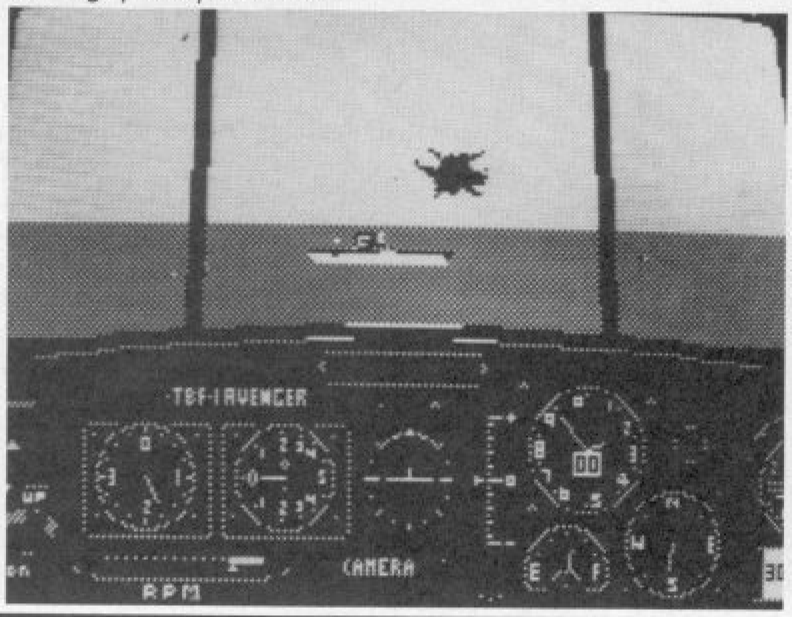


▲ *Ace pilot Glancey takes an early bath.*



▲ *Japanese fighters keep your tail gunner busy.*

▼ *Lining up a torpedo attack.*



PC

► GRAPHICS	80%
► SOUND	40%
► PLAYABILITY	89%
► VALUE	88%
► **OVERALL**	**85%**

UPDATE . . .

The PC version was good, but the ST and Amiga games should be better, with more colours and better sound. Gameplay should be exactly the same, though, if not faster, so it should be an even more essential purchase when it comes out in February.

DRAGON NINJA

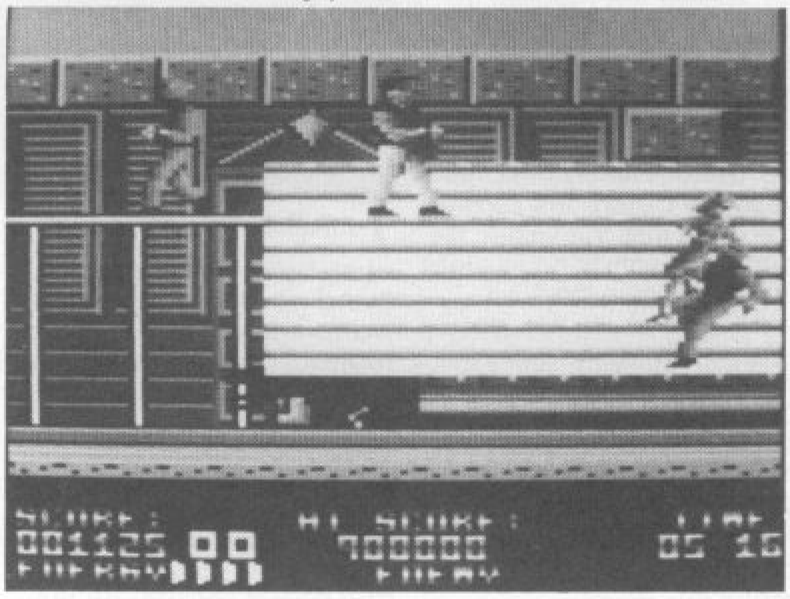
► SPECTRUM £8.95, C64/AMSTRAD £9.95 CASSETTE, £14.95 DISK, ST £19.95, AMIGA £24.95.
► REVIEWER: PAUL GLANCEY.

Well, Ocean didn't waste much time with this conversion – the Dragon Ninja coin-ops only came off the jumbo from Japan about five months ago. By all accounts it was a fairly successful game in spite of the fact that it was in the market (two player beat 'em ups) where Double Dragon reigned supreme.

Ocean's Amstrad conversion lacks the two player option, unfortunately, so you're cast as Blade, a lone fighting machine with a mission to plough through seven scrolling levels of hostile martial artists, and rescue the president of the USA. The fighting moves at your disposal are decidedly unimaginative, just high, low and middle kicks, no fun shoulder-throws, knees to the groin or elbows to the stomach, alas. You do get the option of a mega punch, available by holding down the fire button until Blade's head flashes. In theory this should let rip a blow fit to knock the trunk off an elephant, but I didn't find it any more devastating than the standard middle kick for some reason.

Should you get the better of an armed opponent, you can pick up his weapon, be it a nunchuka or a dagger, and use it to extend the range of your lethal influence by at least six or seven pixels. These come in especially handy at the end of levels when the awesome fatty fighters appear. It has to be said that the ones I reached weren't particularly awesome at all, and were pretty easily defeated.

▼ Blade knocks two bad guys for six.



The thing I didn't really like about Dragon Ninja was that, like a lot of games of this type, there isn't really much room for thoughtful play. For the most part, beating the other guys is simply a matter of how fast you can keep turning around and pressing the fire button – no really special moves for special situations as there are in Double Dragon.

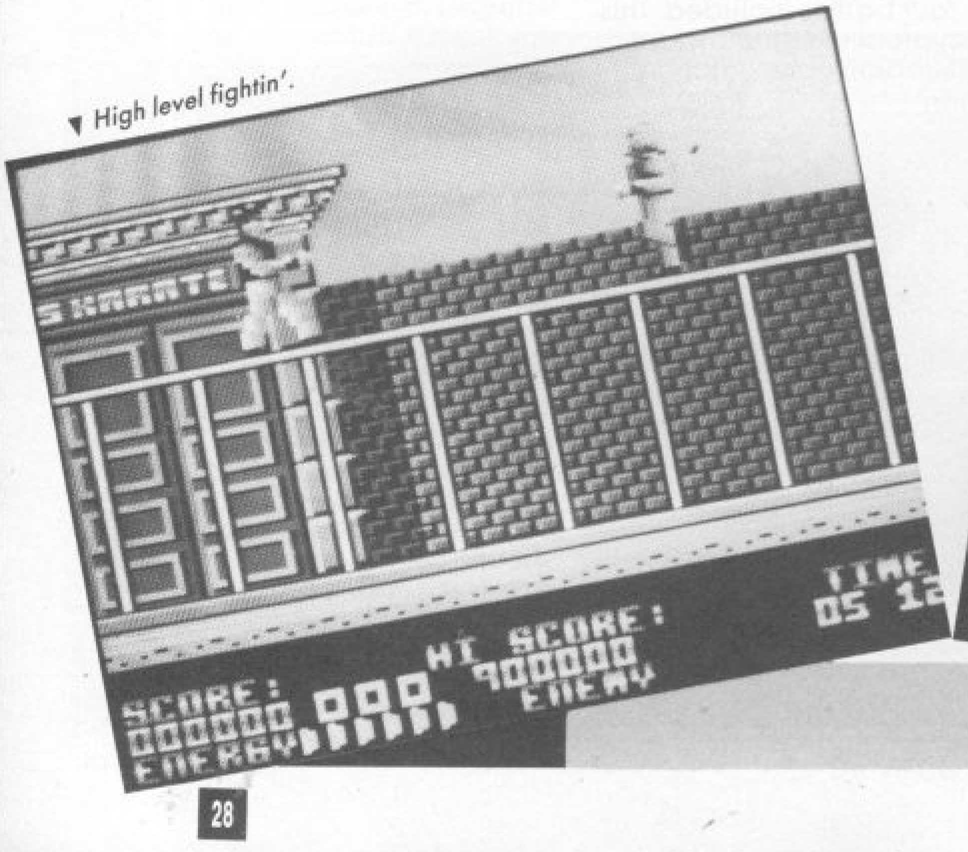
Myself, I wasn't that keen on Dragon Ninja, but all you hardened beat 'em up fans and lovers of the coin-op will probably be getting your money's worth from the conversion. It's competent in the graphics, sound and gameplay departments, but not destined to be a classic example of the genre.

AMSTRAD	
► GRAPHICS	78%
► SOUND	70%
► PLAYABILITY	69%
► VALUE	68%
► **OVERALL**	**69%**

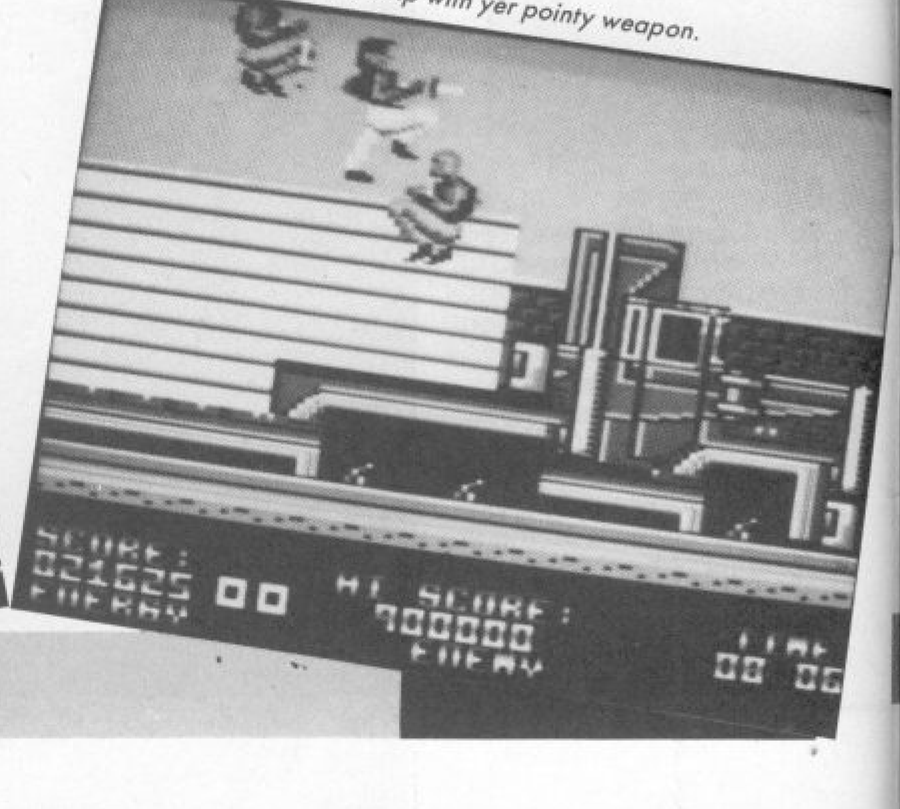
UPDATE . . .

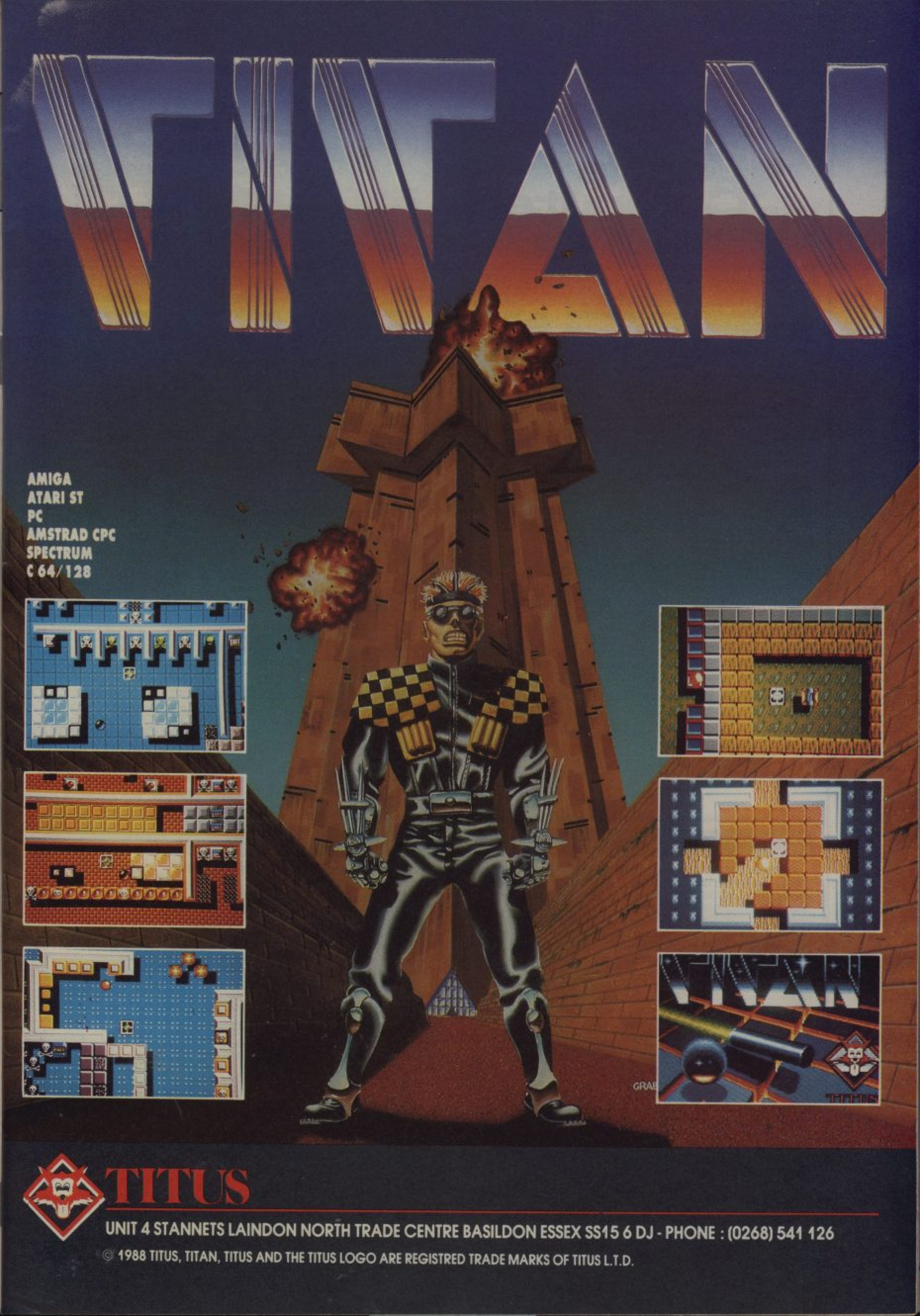
The good news for ST and Amiga owners is that the conversions for their machines should feature the two player option, and that coupled with their better graphics and sound should make Dragon Ninja more of a force to be reckoned with in the beat 'em up market.

▼ High level fightin'.



▼ Let rip with yer pointy weapon.





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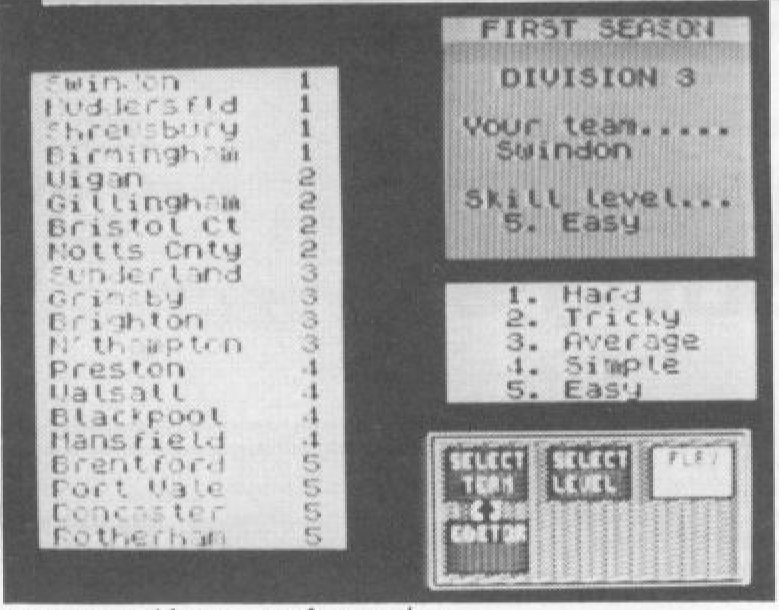
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PRO SOCCER



▲*Managerial footy – not for arcaders.*

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► REVIEWER: TONY DILLON.

The best way I can describe *Pro Soccer* is that it's *Football Manager 2* with more player interaction, more fun, better graphics, playability, design and generally better game play. It may not have the complexities and subleties of *Tracksuit Manager*. but it's just as much fun.

I can't remember how many times I've said this, but you take the role of the coach/accountant of a third division footy team and you have to try your damndest to get to the first division, as well as winning the FA Cup and so on.

I've been waiting for it to happen, and now it finally has. Someone has come up with a different control method for a managerial footy game. In the bottom right hand corner of the screen is a box. Inside this box are six smaller boxes. During the game, any or all of these boxes may be labelled with a different option. You have a little pointer which you have to move so it points at the option you want. The options range from league tables and forthcoming fixtures, to a box mysteriously labelled Action and another labelled Team Centre.

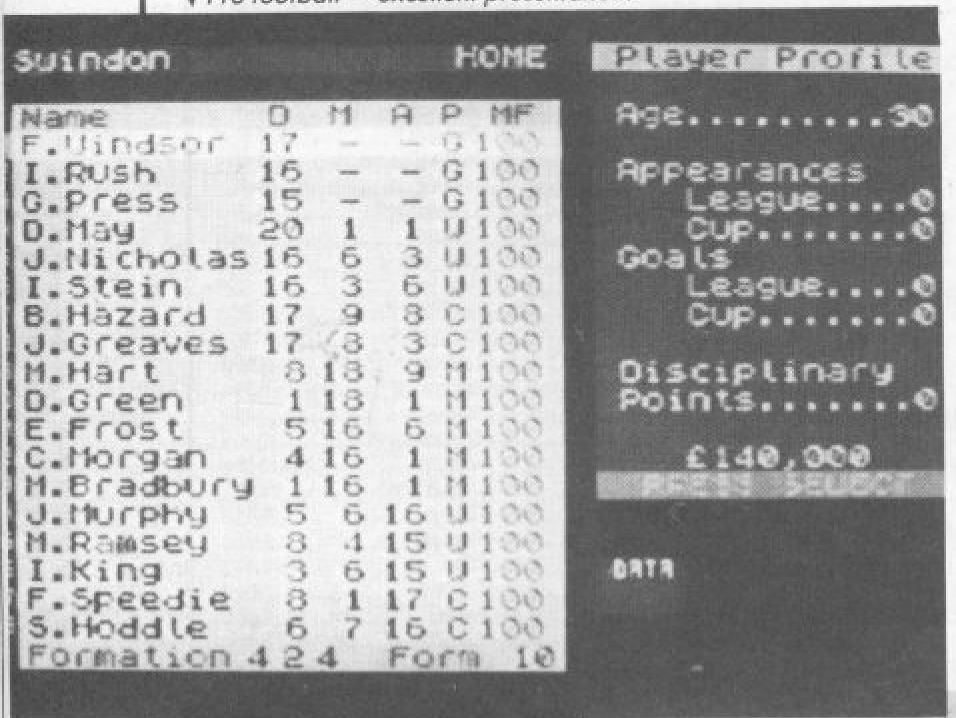
The team centre is where you put together your dozen fighting fit plucky young lads whom you're going to send out against the world. There's two main things you can do in the TC. Firstly you can pick your formation from the seven presented.

Each of the players has a fairly detailed record which keeps track of things like his age, fitness, health plus any outstanding abilities he may have. Also, each player has three scores out of 25. Each represents that player's skill in the attacking, midfielding and defensive areas. Obviously their highest ability will govern their position, you don't put someone with a defence of 21 and an attack of eight in centre forward position, now would you?

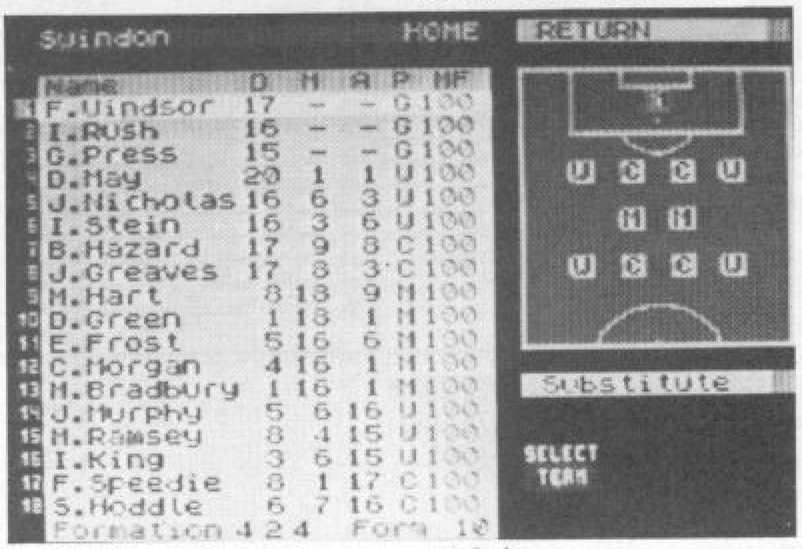
The action box is merely a switch. During the match, every time something happens of the remotest interest, the game switches from a statistical screen showing all the players playing at the time to a Football Manager-style sequence, where you get to watch the match being played. This is quite nice at first, but does get boring very quickly. The Action box lets you turn these sequences off, speeding up the game no end.

Pro Soccer is a very simplistsic footy game. It's not a straight simulation, but there's enough there to get you really involved. It's addictive, too. I've had it for a couple of weeks now, and I play it at any opportunity I get.

Visually it's the best of it's kind I've seen yet. Clean, sharp windows, mixed with a good dose of colour and various sized lettering means that you're not looking at a drab screen



▼*Pro football – excellent presentation.*



▲*Picking your team.*

As I've said, it doesn't have all the subleties of titles like *Tracksuit Manager*, but it's still fab. It's very easy to get into and a damn sight harder to get out of. Try it, you'll be hooked for a good few months.

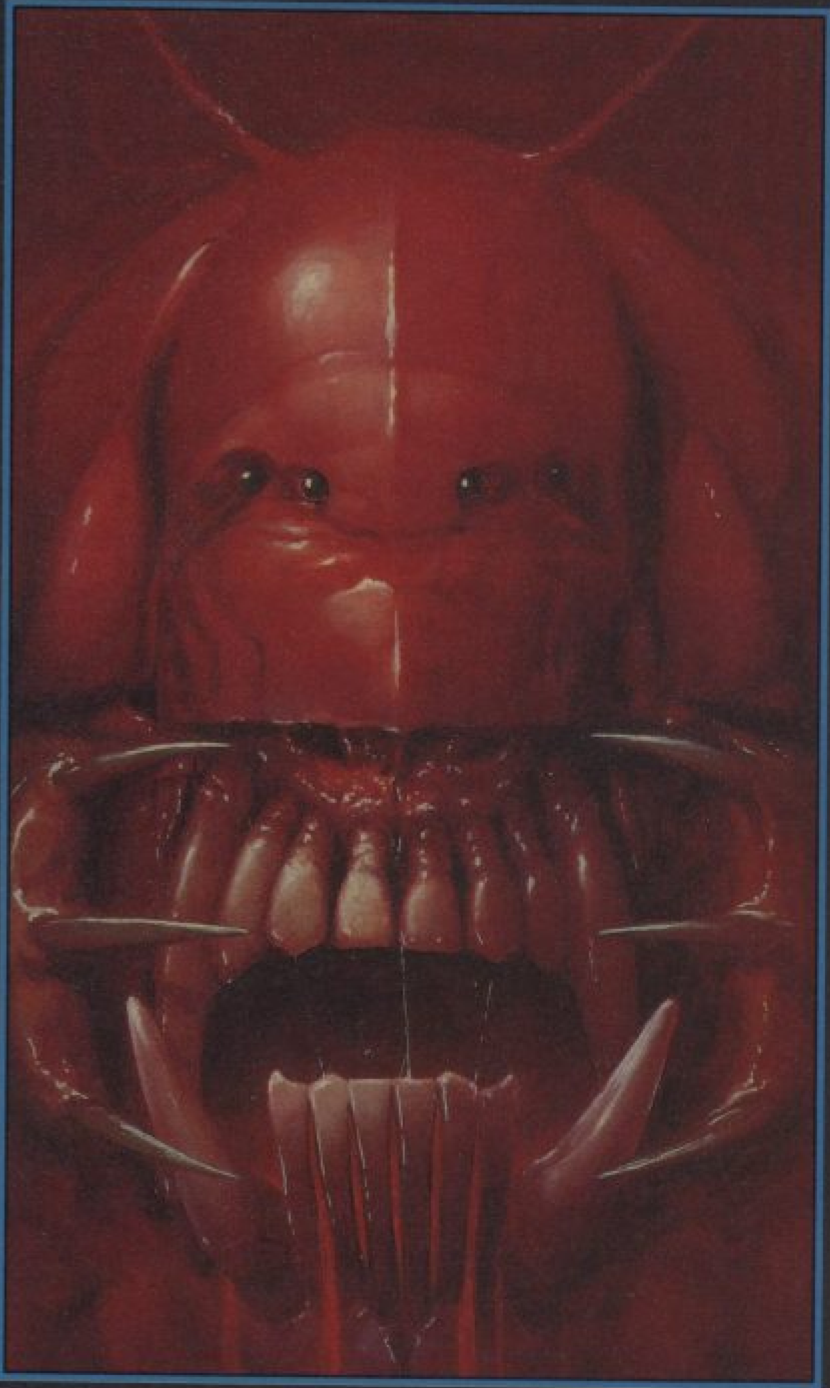
SPECTRUM

► GRAPHICS	81%
► SOUND	65%
► VALUE	80%
► PLAYABILITY	80%
► **OVERALL**	**84%**

UPDATE . . .

Sadly, no other versions are planned.

BAAL









BAAL

- ★ An addictive mixture of strategy and arcade action featuring:
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Reviews

► SUPPLIER: INFOGRAMES.
► ATARI ST/AMIGA/PC £24.95, SPEC/C64 £9.95 CASSETTE, £14.95 DISK.
► REVIEWER: PAUL GLANCEY.

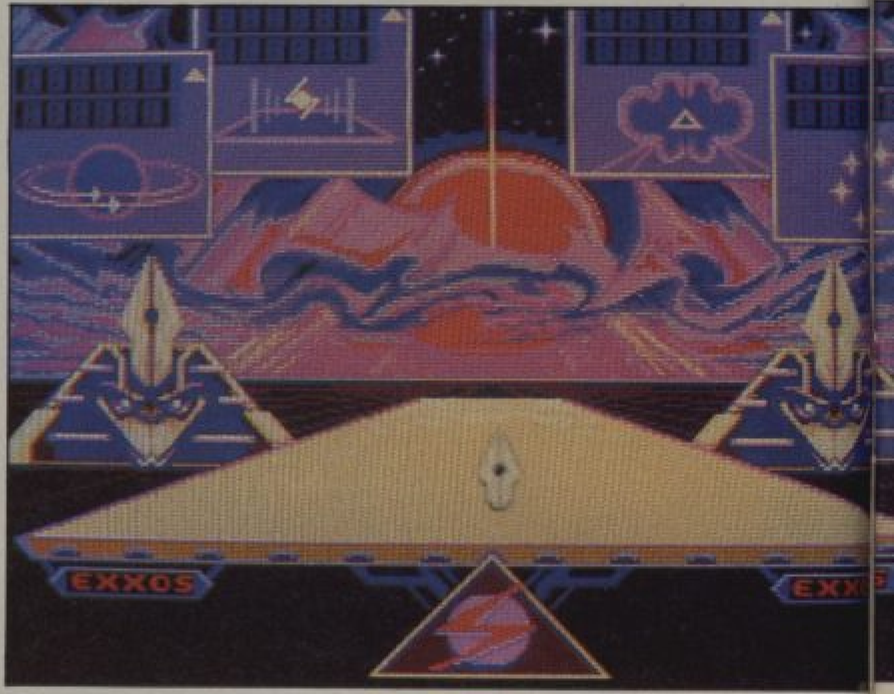
You know, once you've got your Maglux reinforced pressure suit on, screwed down the armoured visor on your Captain Nimmo reproduction space helmet, and hooked up the capillary hoses to your life support system, Saturn's quite a nice place. Of course, the weather is pretty awful, but the people are friendly enough, and terribly keen on sport. On one day of every Saturnian year, they invite every ethereal athlete this side of the Event Horizon to compete in a tournament starting on the first Purple Saturn Day and lasting until the 45th.

You begin the tournament with seven competitors of various species (some of which will be familiar to *Captain Blood* fans). You can size up the competition by checking out a set of statistics relating to each competitor's agility, mental ability, aggression, size, eyesight and ability to travel through time. All the competitors are in a constant state of evolution, which means that after every tournament, their statistics might change slightly. The results of the changes are stored to disk so no game will ever be quite the same as the last. Well, that's what the instructions say, but I reckon you'd have to be doing a hell of a lot of extensive playing to notice the difference. Nice thought though.

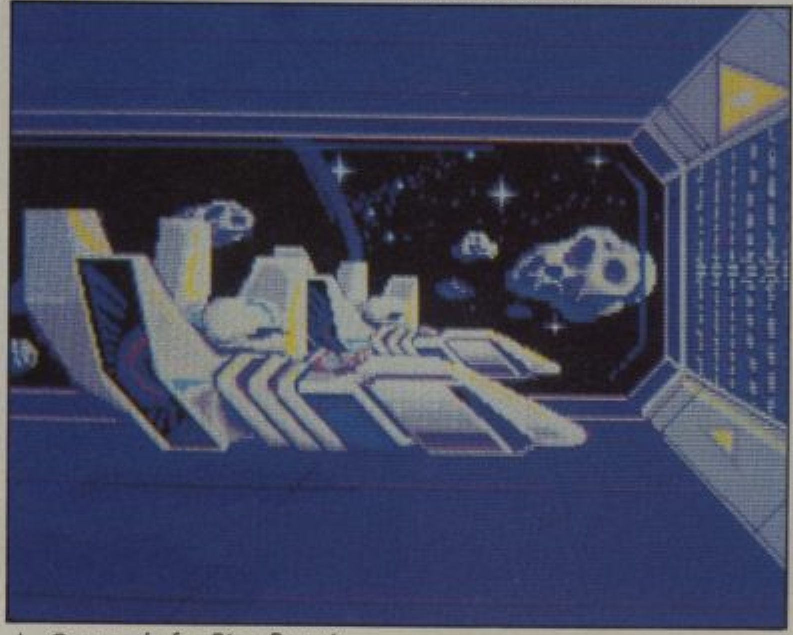
If you don't want to take on the rest of the universe straight away, you can start off by pitting your wits against the training droid, which puts up slightly less of a fight than the other competitors. Just click on an event panel, and after the machine pulls a pretty introductory screen off the disk, you're on your chosen playfield.

Ring Pursuit is a fast and furious 3D race through the rocky rings of Saturn. Basically, you score points by staying in front of the other guy, and slaloming around coloured markers. The longer you stay in front, the more points you get, but it's essential to pass around the markers on the correct side according to their colour. Also, the route through the rings is cluttered with asteroid fields of varying densities, and negotiating these at top speed is something even Han Solo would baulk at. Mouse control is fine, though, and the very fast 3D effect makes this the most exhilirating of the four events.

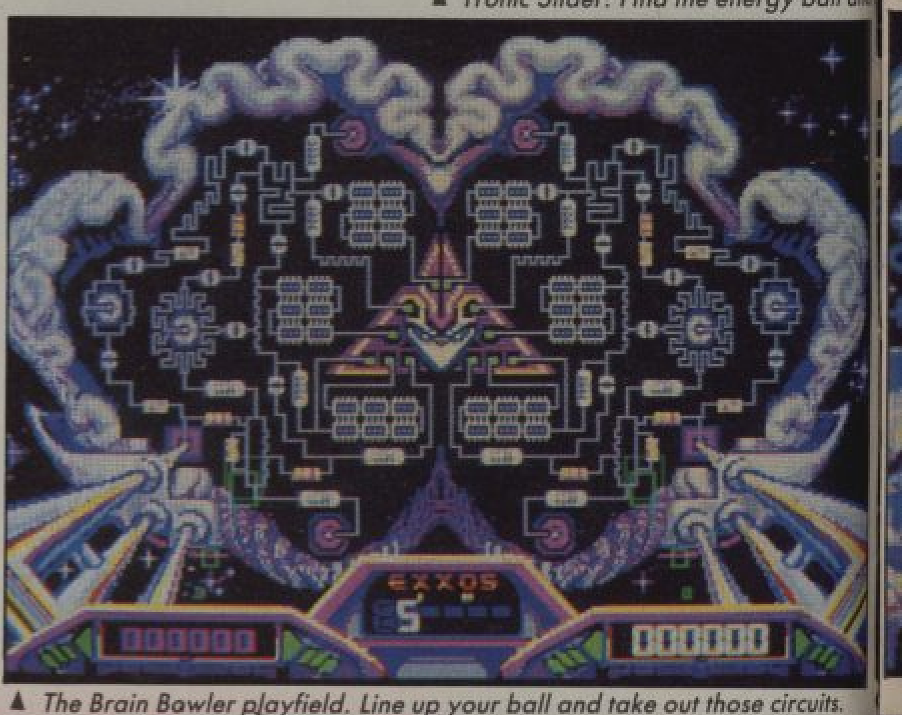
The format in which Tronic Slider is presented will be very familiar to anyone who's ever played Lucas film's *Ballblazer*. You get a 3D view of a floating platform bearing solid pillars. Between the pillars float you and your opponent, both in laser-armed scooters, and an energy ball. Shoot the ball and it explodes into energy fragments which you collect to build up a score. This game has a time limit, and at the end of the match, whoever has



▲ *Choose your event . . .*

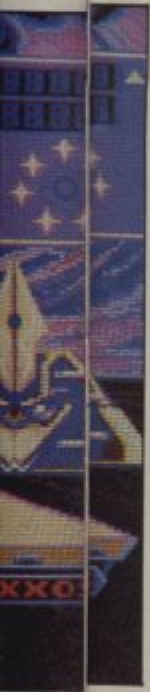

▲ *Get ready for Ring Pursuit.*


▲ *Tronic Slider. Find the energy ball and*



▲ *The Brain Bowler playfield. Line up your ball and take out those circuits.*

SATURNDAY



been able to collect the most fragments is declared the winner. The gameplay is spiced up by the ability to bump into your opponent and knock the fragments he's collected back onto the playfield for you to pick up. This event is played at quite a pace, and again, the effect of moving in a 3D environment is very well done, but I would gripe that when the game really gets going, the rapid turning and bumping into pillars does get a little disorientating.

My favourite event was Brain Bowler, an ingenious combination of logic puzzle and (don't believe this if you don't want to) *Breakout.* You're presented with what looks like an electronic brain, split in half, with energy pulses cruising the network of wires, resistors, switches and chips. With your mouse, you control a ball which is fired at the various components to activate or deactivate them, allowing the pulses to reach your half of a central cortex before your opponent does the same on his side. At first, it looks incredibly complicated, but once you sit down and suss it out it becomes very compulsive and is one of the best blends of arcade action and head scratching that I've seen.

The last event, Time Jump, is far simpler. To propel your vessel through time, you must collect energy sparks to power a gravity catapult. These sparks whizz past you and by positioning your cursor over them and firing you can capture them, filling up a tension meter to show how far into the future you will be shot. After blasting three waves of sparks you're fired into the void at tremendous speed, then through a dimensional gate, where you are shown a "mind-altering vision", which changes shape depending on how many sparks you caught. This is the least taxing of the games, but it's reasonable fun nontheless. It's great strength lies in the marvellous, fast graphics which accompany the final journey, and it's nice to get a visual reward as well as mere numbers for once.

Purple Saturn Day is an excellent package, accomplished with all the graphical style and audio effectiveness of Exxos' other game, Captain Blood. Not only is each game beautifully presented, they are all very playable, and there is such a variety that once you're hooked you'll be playing for weeks to come.

ST	
► GRAPHICS	89%
► SOUND	78%
► PLAYABILITY	86%
► VALUE	81%
► **OVERALL**	**84%**

UPDATE . . .

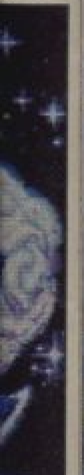
The PC version should be around as you read this, with Spectrum and C64 copies along later in the Spring. It would be wise to expect the Spectrum and Commodore game in a multiload format, but considering the competence of the 8-bit *Captain Blood* conversions, gameplay shouldn't suffer much.



ll and laser it to bits!



▲ Brain Bowler begins.



ts.



▲ Catch those falling stars and put them in your catapult . . .



▲ The winner psyches up for a snog from Miss Purple Saturn Day.

Reviews

NIGHT HUNTER

► SUPPLIER: UBISOFT.
► PRICE: SPEC/AMS/C64 £9.99 CASS, C64/AMS £14.99 DISK, ST £19.99, AMIGA £24.99.
► REVIEWER: JULIAN RIGNALL.

Do you ever get sick of playing the good guys? If you do, you'll be pleased to hear that Night Hunter casts you into the role of an evil do-badder out to make the lives of all good people as miserable as possible. The malevolent one in question is old Count Dracula himself, he of the extended incisors and blood-sucking tendencies. And he's out to create Chaos on Earth.

You see, Drac's had a problem for the last few decades – humans have been protecting themselves with holy medallions which thwart the Count's haemo-slurping activities. But now he's come up with a fiendish master-plan to steal all the medallions, so he and his night-stalking chums can run amok.

Unfortunately a goodie two-shoes by the name of Professor Van Helsing has got wind of these plans and has created an army of anti-vampire hunters to put a premature end to Dracula's gong-grabbing antics. So, old Drac's up against it.

The action is displayed side on, and the screen flicks as Dracula marauds about. The play area is very large – 30 levels, each one 20 screens long. To progress from one level to another, the Count has to collect three parchments and five keys, found littered around the landscape, which opens the door to the next screen. Every fifth door is replaced by a medallion, and when all have been picked up, Drac can have his well-wicked way with humanity.

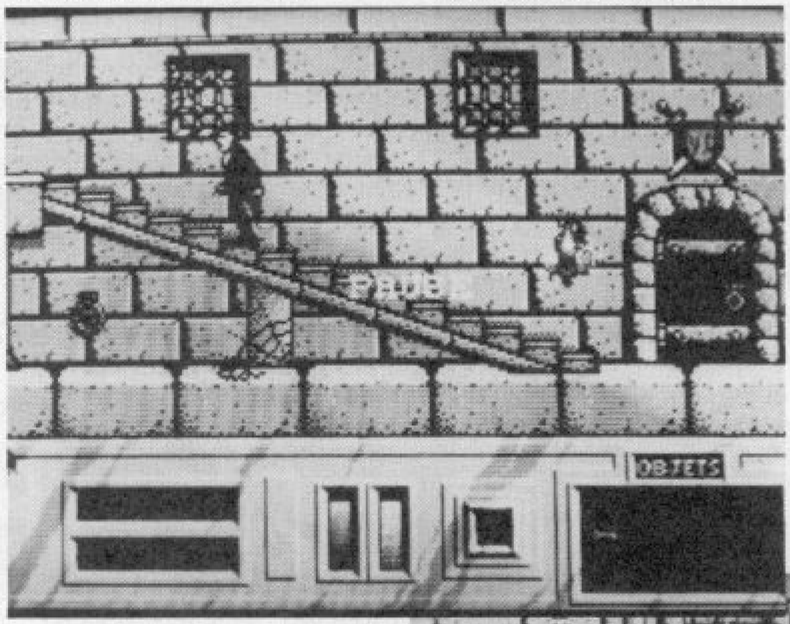
From the very outset of Drac's mission, the good guys attack. These come in all sorts of cuddly 'n' wholesome sizes, and range from bowmen, muscle men and axemen to priests; all attempt to hit Dracula and wear down his energy meter, the depletion of which results in the loss of one of his three lives. Fortunately he can defend himself by grabbing a goodie and sucking the blood from his neck, which tops up the energy bar in the process.

Some parts of the landscape seem inaccessible – but the wicked vampire has the technology to change into a bat and fly over the offending obstacle. He can't stay bat-shaped for long though, and a timer ticks down as he flaps about. He can also change into a Werewolf, with similar time restrictions.

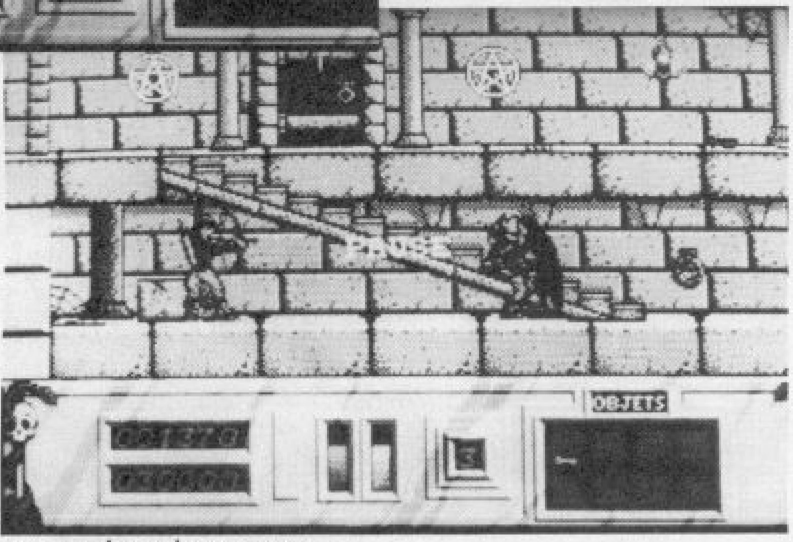
Night Hunter is an odd little game, and certainly provides its fair share of amusement. Digitised sound effects are to the fore, with all sorts of outrageous noises adding to the nocturnal ambience. Owls hoot, rats squeak and frogs sing – and there's also a particularly grisly slurping effect accompanying any blood-sucking activities.

The graphics aren't marvellous, but there are some neat touches like rats and frogs leaping around.

Platform fanatics are recommended to try this out, although those with less enthusiasm for this type of game might find it gets a little tedious after prolonged play.



▲ *Up the stairs to find the key.*



▼ *Watch out for that archer.*

ST

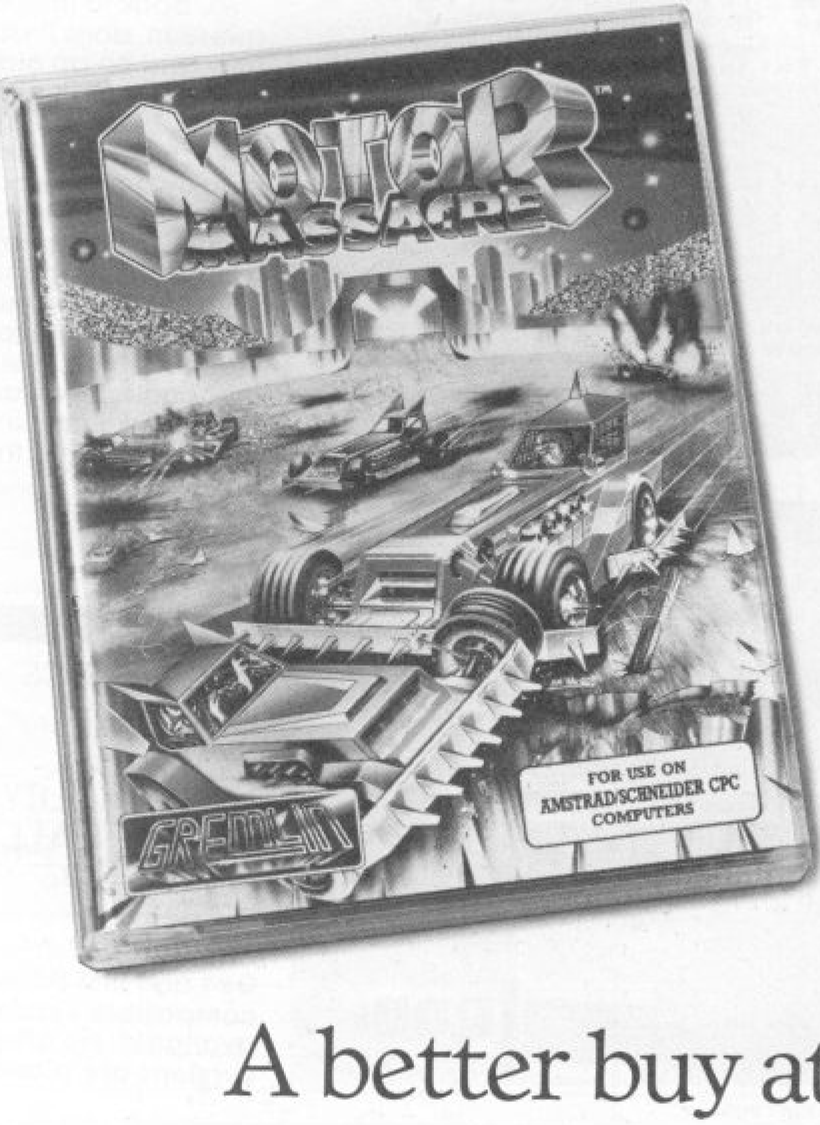
► GRAPHICS	72%
► SOUND	87%
► VALUE	53%
► PLAYABILITY	76%
► **OVERALL**	**71%**

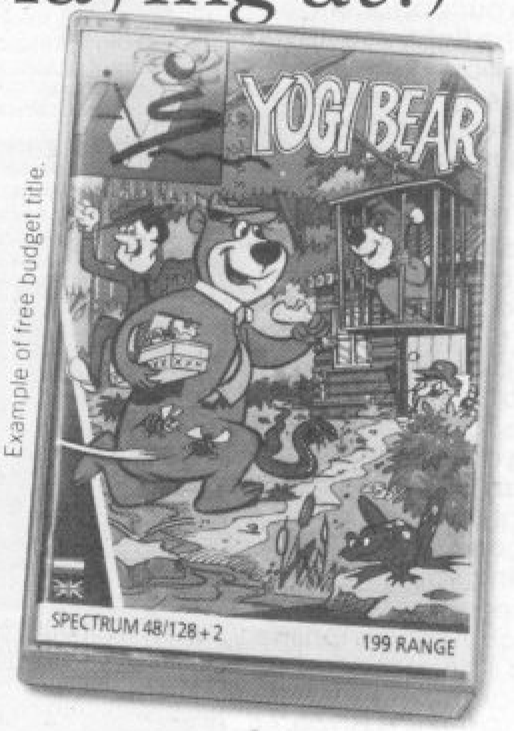
UPDATE . . .

Spectrum, Amstrad, C64 and Amiga versions are all on the cards and Night Hunter should translate to all formats pretty well. The graphics won't be as good on the 8-bit versions, but if the gameplay is retained, they should be pretty good fun.

Free Computer Games.

(What are Boots playing at?)





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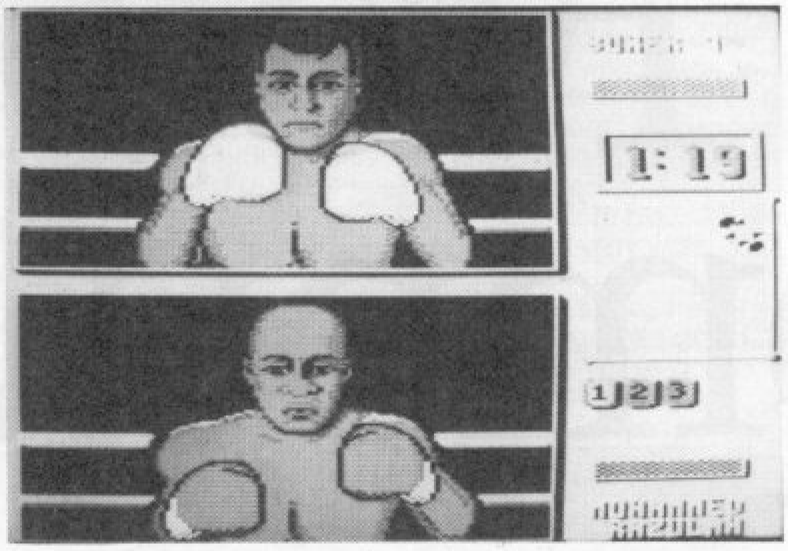
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Reviews

- ► MACHINE: C64.
- ► SUPPLIER: ACCOLADE.
- ► PRICE: £9.99 CASS.
- ► VERSION TESTED: C64.
- ► REVIEWER: TONY DILLON.



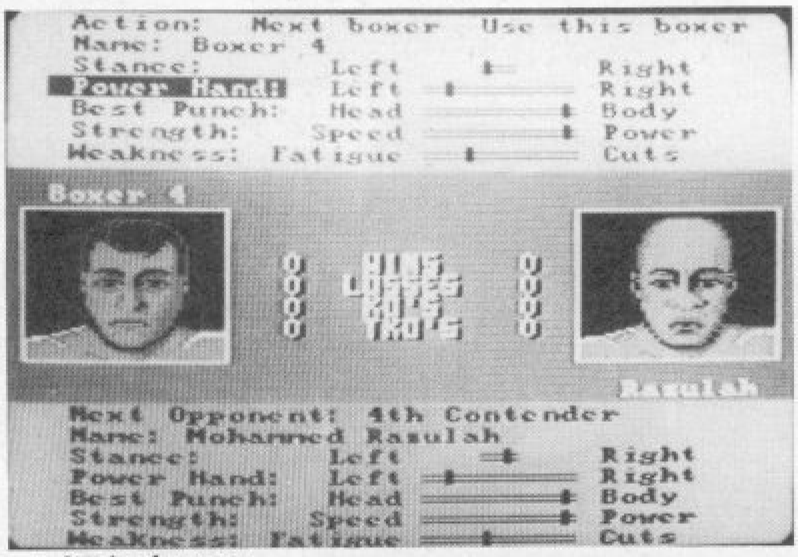
▲ *Fists up – seconds away.*

TKO

Well, it's original, I can safely say that much: two-player Punch Out, first-person perspective and split screen. Not a bad idea but the question on everybody's lips is, does it work?

Play either one-player against a series of opponents of increasing difficulty in a bid to win the title, or two-player with no aim other than to knock the socks off your opponent.

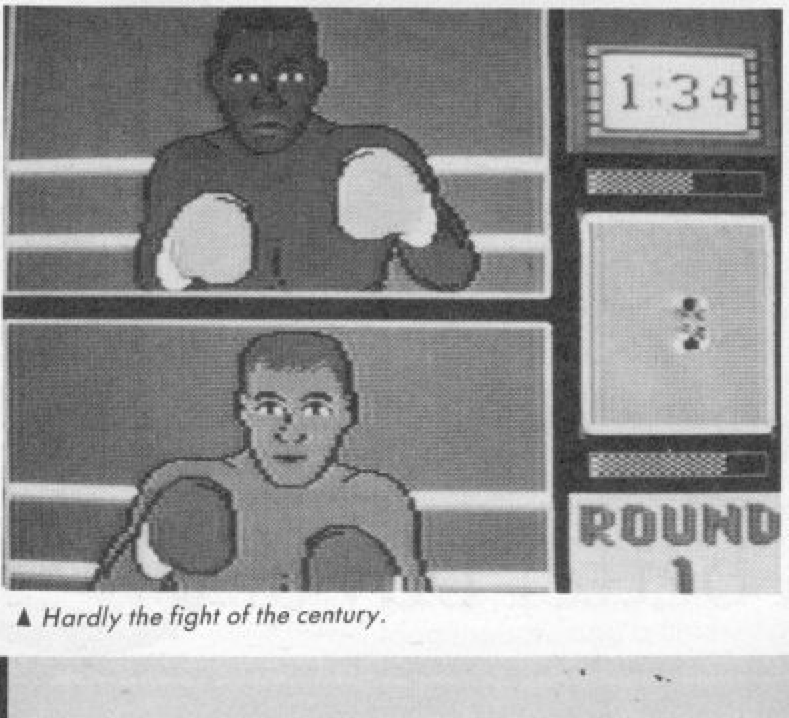
Before the fight, you have to build a boxer. This is done by using a number of slide markers, each representing a different balance. You can decide between left and right stances, a hand with the most punching power, best punch (body or head), and balance out between speed of punch and power and choose your boxer's weakness. Once you've created your boxer and called him a suitable hard man tough guy name like Tony, Eugene or Cecil, it's into the ring you go.



▲ *Stacks of strategy.*

The screen is set up into a number of windows. On the left hand side of the screen are two large ones (phwurr). Each is a boxer's eye view of the other boy as he (yes, it is a he, I'm not being sexist) bobs and weaves around the ring, more often than not taking pot shots at your head.

Controls are fairly simple – up and down raise and lower your boxer's arms, effectively raising and lowering his guard as well as selecting between body and head punches. Left and right select between left and right hands and fire takes a swing. Get a hit, and your enemy's head rolls back with pain.



▲ *Hardly the fight of the century.*

To win with style is to win a knockout, and to get a knockout, you have to completely eradicate your opponent's energy level by laying on blow after blow in quick succession. This is a very, very hard thing to do – nearly every punch you throw, provided you throw punch after punch without stopping has to hit with maximum power and accuracy. The only other way you can win is to win by points, getting in more successful punches than him each round.

The graphics are quite nice. Large and colourful, the way the boxer's hand grows to huge proportions and then receeds to give the impression of punching out of the screen works really well. When you knock down a man, you get a short scene of that player on the floor, desperately trying to climb the ropes while the referee looks on. This looks like a digitised shot that's been coloured in.

So, back to the opening question, does it work? It's a new twist on an old theme, and granted, it plays quite nicely. The problem is, the novelty wears off too quickly and you are left with an essentially boring game. The gameplay dies within the first round and any feelings of 'one more go' are begging for mercy inside of three. Not a TKO for Accolade. In fact, I don't think they've managed to get through the ropes.

C64

► GRAPHICS	68%
► SOUND	43%
► VALUE	40%
► PLAYABILITY	58%
► **OVERALL**	**54%**

UPDATE . . .

C64 and IBM PC and compatible versions are available. No other versions are planned.

R.Type

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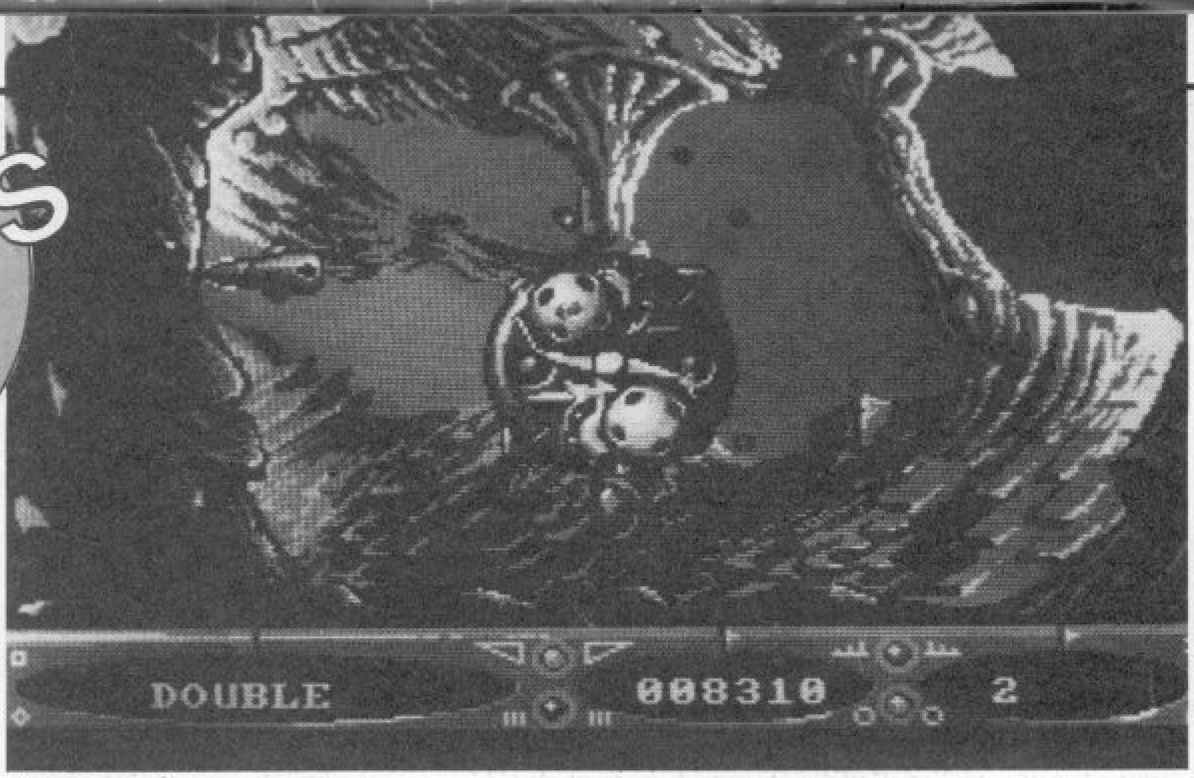
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Reviews



▲ *Damn and blast.*

PHANTOM FIGHTER

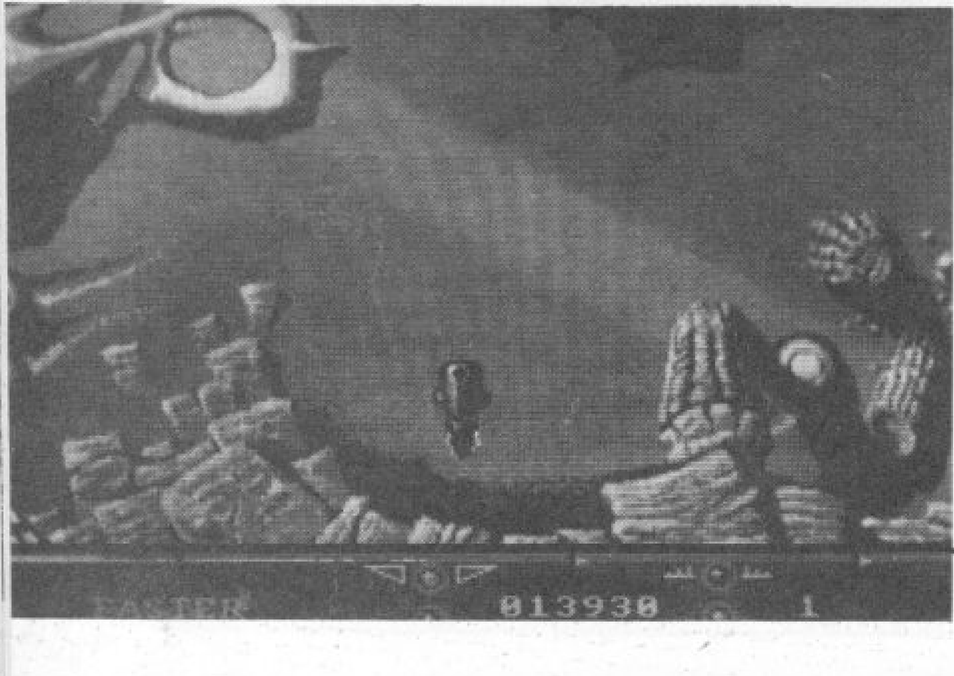
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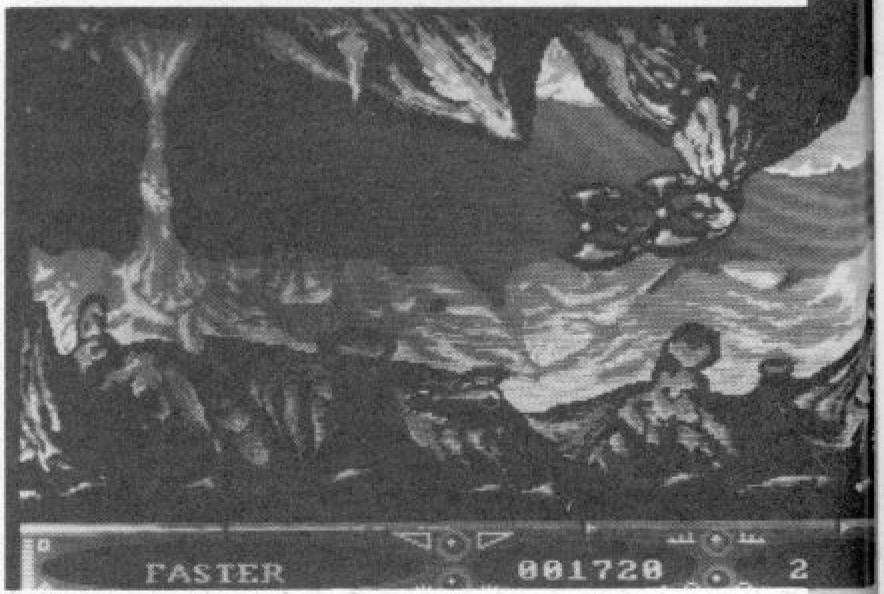
As my granny used to say, there's nothing like a game that breaks new ground – and *Phantom Fighter* is nothing like a game that breaks new ground. Yep, originality takes a back seat as Emerald Software and Martech present us with a scrolling shoot 'em up, with, yes, you guessed, add on weapons!

Well, let's have a look at the instructions – maybe the plot will help it stand out. It all starts out with you being part of a colony on a distant planet, which suddenly comes under attack from Korts, small blobs of throbbing flesh which have apparently developed homicidal tendencies. When they disappear into the desert wastelands surrounding the colony, you are sent with a crumbly called MacMixDune to destroy them before they return. BUT, the REAL threat ISN'T the Korts at all. It turns out that the desert is inhabited by soul-sucking demons who pilot ancient ships around the place, blasting all and sundry. Silly old MacMixDune knew all this but didn't bother telling you, because you are the Chosen One. You are the Phantom Fighter! Phew! Exciting isn't it?

Well, not exactly. Play is basically a matter of flying your craft over alternating horzintally and vertically scrolling backdrops, pumping the oncoming "phantoms" full of laser bolts with their names on them. Occasionally an obliterated squadron leaves behind a capsule for you to pick up. Shoot the capsule BEFORE you pick it up and it changes its function to provide speedups, faster and more powerful lasers, Plasma weapon (which fires in all directions), side lasers and homing missiles. None of these is particularly innovative or visually exciting, with the possible exception of the Plasma weapon, which can wipe out whole squadrons with a single shot, and trash end-of-level fatties with just a few blasts.

▼ *Blow 'em away.*





▲ *An average shooter.*

Basically, *Phantom Fighter* does try to be a nice shoot 'em up – the graphics are nice, the sound is tolerable and it plays reasonably well – but I'm afraid it just hasn't got anything really special going for it, so in the end you tend to find yourself getting annoyed by details such as the small screen area on the vertically scrolling sections, and the slightly suspect collision detection. In fact, after a dozen trips out to level two, my mind was starting to wander, and I don't think it'll be returning to this game for quite a while.

AMIGA	
► GRAPHICS	70%
► SOUND	50%
► PLAYABILITY	62%
► VALUE	60%
► **OVERALL**	**60%**

UPDATE . . .

No plans for conversions to any other formats – apparently the programmers don't think any other machines "could do the game justice". Hmmm.

ANDES ATTACK

► **SUPPLIER: LLAMASOFT.**
► **PRICE: ST £9.95.**
► **REVIEWER: JULIAN RIGNALL.**

It's been quite a while since Jeff Minter produced a game, but he's back with a vengeance with *Andes Attack*, an updated version of his old VIC 20 game. Before you swoon away at the thought of a VIC 20 game on your ST, let me tell you a little about it.

Rather than produce a 16-bit mega-game with 50 zillion locations and filled-3D graphics, Minter has decided to go back to grass roots and produce a straightforward, fast arcade blast. The result is a Stargdate/Defender clone.

The player patrols a two-way horizontally scrolling planet and defends his eight llamas from the marauding aliens. These horrors attempt to whisk away the llamas to the top of the screen, whereupon the alien mutates and chases after your ship. If a thieving alien is shot while he's carrying a llama, the llama drops to earth and can be caught and set back on terra firma for bonus points. It dies if it falls unchecked – and when all the llamas have either been killed or spirited away, the landscape explodes and the player enters hyerspace, which is filled with hordes of very aggressive aliens.

As well as an army of llama-grabbers to blow up, there are plenty of other aliens to keep you on your toes, each type with its own personality and attack patterns. The ship is equipped with smart bombs, invisi shield (both limited) and there's a radar scanner at the top of the screen to give you advanced warning of oncoming hazards. You can also warp to higher levels by carrying more than four llamas through a warp gate.

The control method is brilliant, but takes a bit of getting used to. The mouse is used to guide the ship up and down, while the buttons are used to thrust and turn the ship around. Three keys on the keyboard are used for smart, fire and shield. It's rather daunting at first, but the controls "feel" superb.

Obvious comparisons will be made between this and *Star Ray*, and while *Star Ray* is graphically superior, it has nothing like the fast, frantic gameplay and superb playability of *Andes Attack*. The action is very colourful, noisy and non-stop, and I found myself getting a genuine adrenalin buzz when I played it – something a shoot 'em up hasn't done for me for ages!

The on-screen presentation is excellent, with details of each alien, a training mode and a highscore table that automatically saves to disk. There's also a highscore competition.

Andes Attack is a raw and uncompromising shoot 'em up that'll have you on the edge of your seat – an essential purchase for the maniacal blasting fan.

▼*A psychedelic Stargate clone.*





▲ *Adrenalin-pumping action.*

▼ *Fly low and blast!*



ST

► GRAPHICS	71%
► SOUND	62%
► VALUE	82%
► PLAYABILITY	87%
► **OVERALL**	**88%**

UPDATE . . .

No other versions are planned. However, Llamasoft have plans for other ST titles in this series, the next of which is a very enhanced Gridrunner. What about doing Laser Zone, Jeff?

DRAGON'S LAIR

► SUPPLIER: SILMARILS.
► PRICE: AMIGA £44.95.
► REVIEWER: JULIAN RIGNALL.

In 1983 the first laser disk arcade game appeared – Sega's *Astron Belt*. Its mixture of real-life images, computer graphics and CD sound was hailed as revolutionary, even though the game wasn't particularly brilliant. A few months later laser disk technology was used to produce the first interactive cartoon game, *Dragon's Lair*. It looked and sounded incredible,



▲ *Dirk the daring . . .*



▲ *Don't get slimed.*

but unfortunately the gameplay was restrictive. All the player had to do was push the joystick in the right direction or press the fire button at the right time to continue to the next sequence; failure to do so resulted in an often humerous death sequence. Still, from this beginning it was hoped that the format would produce great things.

Sadly this wasn't to be. William's Star Rider, a fabulous motorcycle race game, certainly showed what the laser disk was capable of producing, but

There's singe! ▼





the incredibly expensive machines were prone to frequent failure (especially in seaside resorts, where sand getting into the scanning equipment caused nothing but problems), and the format died out.

Now Don Bluth, designer of the original game, has got together with Readysoft to produce an Amiga version of the game which fully captures the

GON'S
AIR



▲ *Awlright darlin'?*

spirit of the classic arcade game. Unlike Software Project's version of *Dragon's Lair* (and the sequel *Escape From Singe's Castle)*, where the game was recreated in a series of arcade-style screens, Readysoft have produced the game as you'd see it in the arcades – like a cartoon!

For those who never saw the arcade game, *Dragon's Lair* casts the player as Dirk Daring, a courageous knight out to rescue a beautiful princess from the clutches of Singe, a giant green dragon. And he's not jolly. The mission of mercy involves entering Singe's castle and avoiding a variety of hazards and monsters before finally confronting



▲ *Leap through the gap.*

the fire-spitting one himself.

The Amiga version of *Dragon's Lair* comes on a massive SIX disks, and a 1 megabyte memory is required to run the game. But when you actually see it, it's easy to see why so much memory is taken up – the game looks just like a cartoon, and I'm not kidding. Massive sprites, silky smooth animation and real perspective shifts are all part and parcel of this stunning-looking game. Not only that, there are also great chunks of speech and sound effects sampled from the arcade machine.

Dirk starts outside the castle, and gives a mean 'n' shifty look left and right before turning around and scampering across the drawbridge. Not is all as it seems, however, and the drawbridge collapses leaving Dirk hanging from the debris. Within a second a horrid monster with writhing tentacles bursts from the moat and attacks, presenting the player with the first of many problems. Which action should Dirk take? Should he jump off the drawbridge, or take a swipe at the pink leviathan with his trusty broadsword?

Actions are undertaken by moving the joystick or pressing fire – and the wrong move results in the loss of one of Dirk's three lives, while a correct move results in Dirk completing the maneouvre, and the next action is attempted. When the scene has been completed, the next one loads. Failure in a scene requires the player to replay it from the beginning.

The timing of moves is critical and often finnicky, which can become frustrating, especially since you have to start all the way from the beginning with every new game. Still, the arcade game had similar faults.

The adventure continues

▼ *What a choker!*



Reviews

DRAGON'S LAIR

in this vein, some scenes requiring multiple actions, and others just a well-timed press of the fire button. To squeeze a little more out of the game, some scenes are played twice, one normally, and the other a mirror image, so the opposite moves have to be used.

Although *Dragon's Lair* looks and sounds absolutely incredible – it's by far the most visually impressive computer game to date – it has one serious flaw: it lacks lasting appeal. I admit that I thoroughly enjoy playing it, but the game is the same every time you play it, and once you know all the moves required to go through each scene it all becomes a matter of strict routine. Working out how to do each scene is a process of elimination, rather than skill, and it doesn't take very long to go all the way through the game.

The gargantuan price tag is also a major gripe. Even though there are six disks, the amount of actual gameplay is minimal. *Dragon's Lair* is a superb demonstration of the Amiga's graphics and sound potential – it's just a shame that there isn't much of a game to play.



▲ *Dirk's reward.*



▲ *Will true love prevail?*

AMIGA	
► GRAPHICS	98%
► SOUND	94%
► VALUE	25%
► PLAYABILITY	36%
► **OVERALL**	**51%**

UPDATE . . .

There are plans to produce an 18-cassette Spectrum version . . . No – only joking. An ST version might see the light of day, but otherwise there are no plans to produce Dragon's Lair for any other machines. If you want a version of *Dragon's Lair*, look up the old Software Projects game, especially *Escape From Singe's Castle*, which is particularly good.

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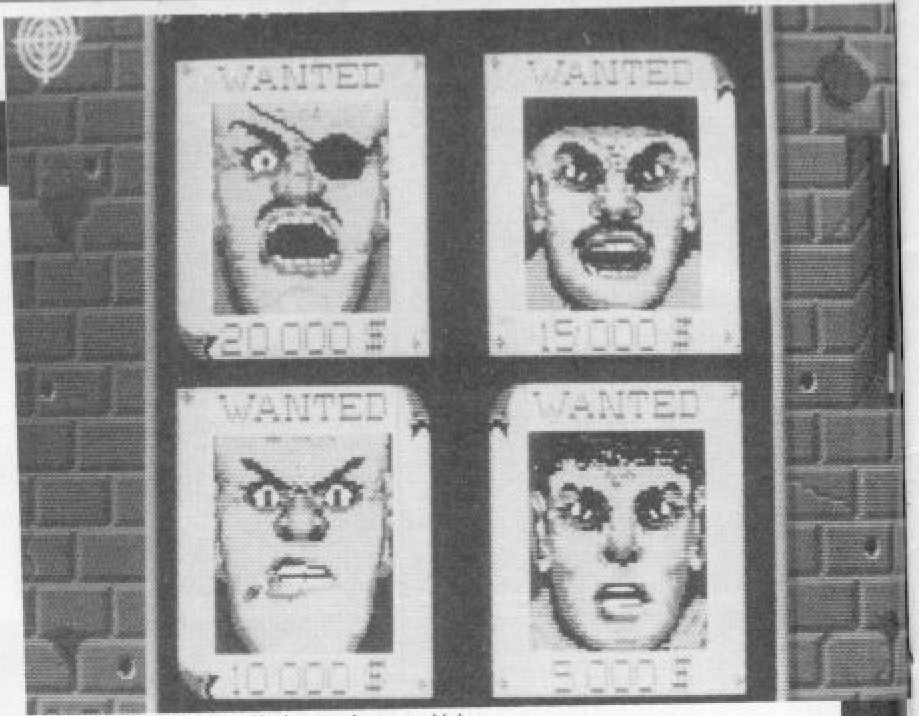
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The tumbleweed blows down the streets of Arkansas as you approach the wall of the county jail to see whose faces are supporting a price this week. Finding a group of four fresh faces, with rewards ranging from $5,000 to $20,000, you choose a likely candidate and plug a symbolic bullet hole in his countenance.

You'd like to take your trusty mule along, but the ground is too treacherous so heading off on foot you enter an *Ikari Warriors*-style scrolling landscape to capture the bad guy of your choice. The enemy is quick to appear and attacks from the front or either side, with the gang's size and meanness corresponding directly to the size of the reward offered.

Your Colt 45 fires a hefty six bullets at a time (in three directions) on your first life, falling to four on your second and two on your third and final incarnation. A beating heart icon pumps a little extra life into your veins (it's the way i tell 'em), but there'lll be a lot of desperadoes lining the route before you come across one of these.

If you can manage to tear yourself away from all of this death and destruction for a couple of seconds, you may notice the barrels which line the route. A well placed bullet will shatter these, revealing a range of accessories which are essential to the well-equipped western law enforcer. Bullets need no explanation, while dynamite acts as a smart bomb and a shield gives you a ring of confidence and a tough skin to boot. More infrequently, yellow lettered icons allow you to choose whichever of these options you want.

Other tokens are also available (boots, carbines and sherrifs' stars to name but three) and are notched up on a table at the bottom left of the screen, but with the notable exception of the dynamite sticks it's difficult to know what use they are. The accompanying booklet doesn't shed much light on the subject either, telling you for instance that the sherrif's star 'lets you wipe out the outlaw's hired help that much faster' – but gives no clue as to how to use it.

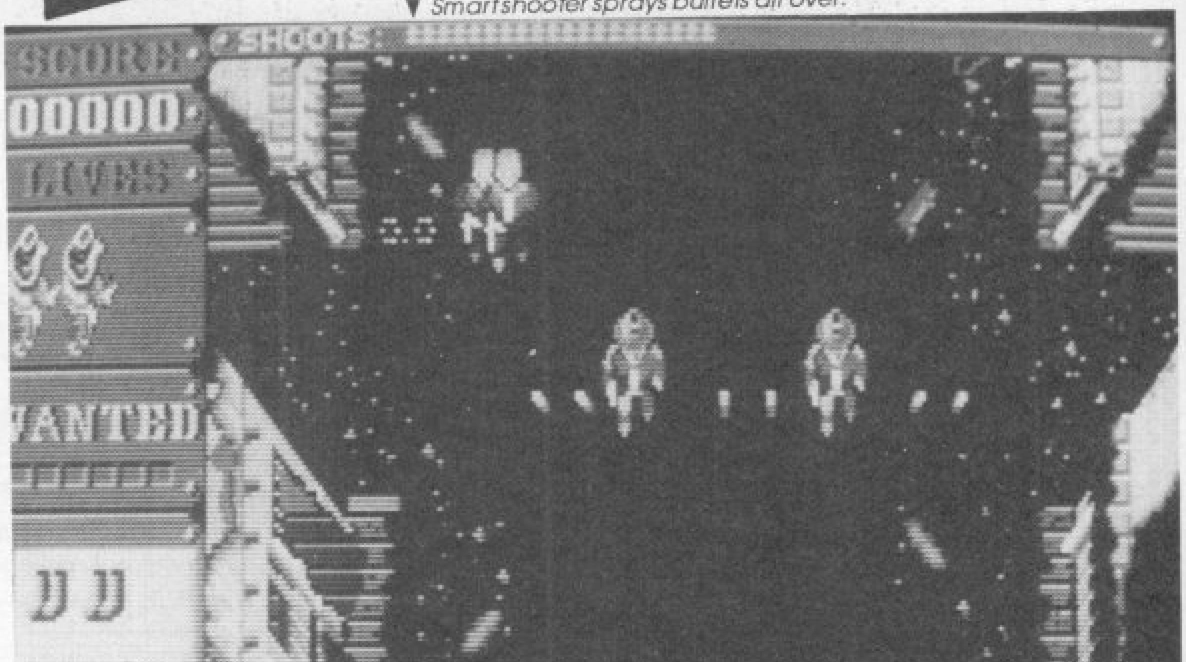
Wanted is a bit short of original ideas, and lacks a little polish on the presentation side, it's also about as addictive as a Kylie and Jason duet. I found myself infuriated, exasperated, intimidated – but mostly entertained (that doesn't rhyme!) . . . and if you're not already sick of this type of game maybe you will too.

ST	
► GRAPHICS	72%
► SOUND	71%
► VALUE	73%
► PLAYABILITY	78%
► **OVERALL**	**70%**

UPDATE . . .

Both 16-bit versions play identically, with the visual and aural differences so slight that they they're hardly worth mentioning. Despite the gameplay's apparent simplicity, there are no plans for any 8-bit versions.

▼ *Smartshooter sprays bullets all over.*



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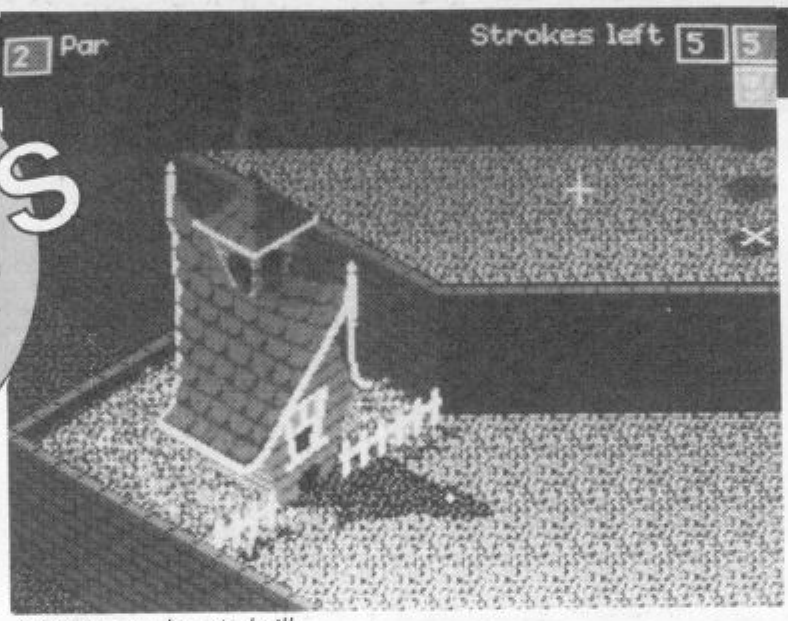
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Reviews

► SUPPLIER: ELECTRONIC ARTS.
► PRICE: ST/AMIGA/PC £24.95.
► REVIEWER: PAUL GLANCEY.

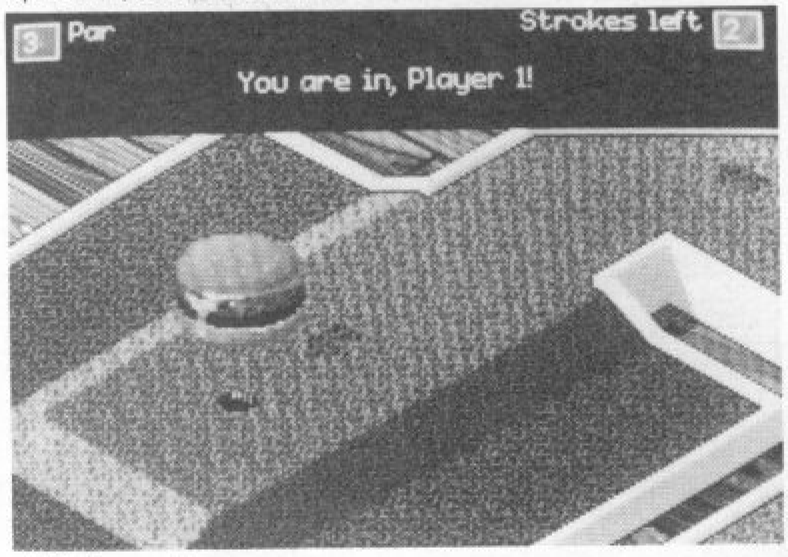


▲ *Putting on the windmill.*

ZANY GOLF

Being of feeble frame, I've never been one for participation in strenuous sporting events. But one place where my athletic prowess ranks alongside the greatest, is on the Crazy Golf course. However, in all my years of touring from Tynemouth to Blackpool, I've never seen a course as thoroughly crazy and downright fun to play as the ones in this game.

As its name suggests, *Zany Golf* is a step up from merely crazy, and features nine scrolling holes populated with such delights as bouncing quarter-pounders with a ketchup bumper, magic castles, pintables, force-shielded computers with laser guns and even uphill greens which have to be negotiated by blowing the ball along with electric fans! Amongst these oddities, the programmers have still found room for the good old windmill which appears on the same hole as the equally familiar lighthouse.



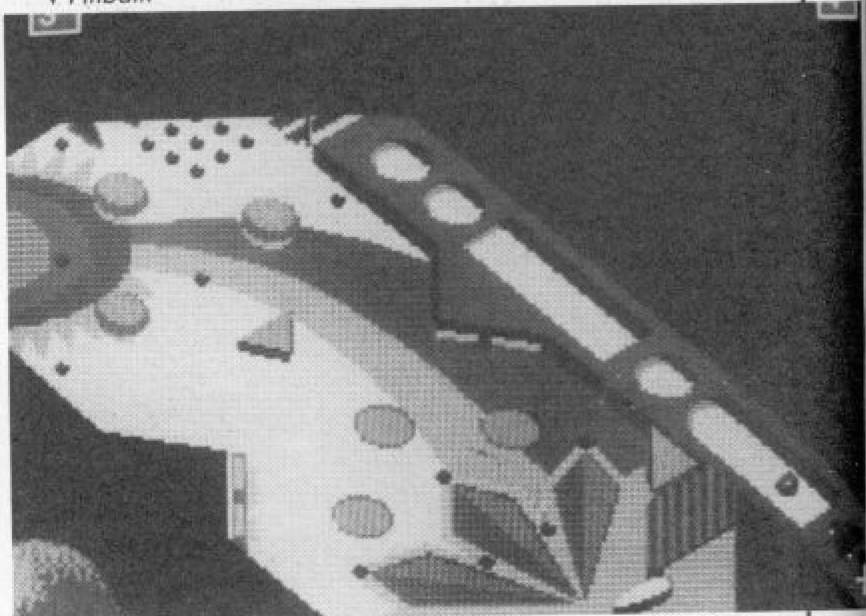
▲ *It's burger time.*

After being shown a plan of each hole, your ball (and those of up to three other players) starts on the tee, ready to putt. By clicking the mouse button and holding it, you stretch a line out from the ball which represents the strength and direction of the putt. The standard laws of physics apply concerning rebounds and momentum, but the ball does seem to travel a little too far when it looks like it should stop.

You get a set quota of spare shots for every game and every putt over each hole's par is subtracted from that quota. You can gain bonus shots by finishing a hole under par, or completing stunt shots or, when the opportunity arises, hitting a fairy which appears on the green, and finishing a hole under a time limit.

The graphics throughout the game show a remarkable attention to detail and have obviously had hours of work spent over them all, from the stylish title screens and introductory sequences to the beautifully drawn and animated course scenery.

▼ *Pinball!*



The only fault I could possibly pick (with the ST version, anyway) is the slightly jerky scrolling which appears when the ball puts on a burst of speed.

Each course has its own musical accompaniment, which usually takes the form of wacky fairground-style tunes. They're all very good, but they do tend to grind on a bit, which becomes irritating when you're trying to sink that crucial putt.

But I don't want to put *Zany Golf* down with such petty quibbles when it is a game deserving much praise. Play is such an enjoyable combination of luck and skill (with a bit of frustration thrown in for good measure) that you'll be coming back to it for ages. If alien blasting isn't your thing, rush out and buy this now – I'm sure you won't be disappointed.

ST	
► GRAPHICS	92%
► SOUND	60%
► PLAYABILITY	82%
► VALUE	80%
► **OVERALL**	**81%**

UPDATE . . .

The screenshots we've seen make the EGA PC version look exactly the same as the ST game with one or two colour changes, but the Amiga version should be something of an improvement, with smoother scrolling and better music making a great game even better.

FULL WARNING STATUS: CONDITION RED



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LEAF-BLA

Reviews

WILLOW

► **SUPPLIER: MINDSCAPE.**
► **PRICE: C64 DISK £14.99, AMIGA/ST/PC £24.99.**
► **REVIEWER: PAUL GLANCEY.**

Willow Ufgood, the nicest Nelwyn in town, has a bit of a problem with a enchanted child he found in the river one day. Elora Danan, as she's called, is destined to spell doom for local witch queen, Bavmorda, and so Bavmorda has despatched her army to hunt her down and bring her back. Now he has pledged to protect the child, Willow has no choice but get involved in the rebellion against Bavmorda's tyranny, which leads him and his rebel compatriots through seven sub-exploits.

Each section can be played in sequence, as a quest, or you can choose to practice any of the seven separately.

First up is a run through the dungeons with virtuous midwife, Ethna. This takes the form of a 3D maze, the screen showing a view of each dungeon, with exits leading in any of four directions. Dawdle over choosing your exit and one of Bavmorda's knights appears and carts you off to the nearest cell. Similarly, if you make a wrong move and walk into a cell, you are given no chance to escape, and the door closes behind you. So it's back to the start for another go. Oh, well . . .

In the next section, Willow has to go through woods teeming with soldiers and Death Dogs, armed only with three magic acorns which turn anything they hit to stone. This has to be about the weakest subgame, featuring garish graphics, jerky movement, very ropey collision detection and sluggish controls.

Reach the crossorads and you're faced with two cages, one holding a disgraced but basically friendly warrior, Madmartigan, and the other holding Death. Using your skill, judgement and a tossed coin you have to choose a cage to open. Why bother?

Aged sorceress Fin Raziel has fallen victim to Bavmorda's magic and if you want to recruit her in the next stage you have to change her from a possum back to a human. You do this in three stages by picking sets of three tunes from a panel of 13.

▼ *Ooops! Ethna gets collared in the dungeons!*



▼ *Willow falls foul of the denizens of Nockmaar Woods.*



A tad more exciting is the trip through the ice caves which comes next. You get a view down a tunnel which you are speeding down on a makeshift sledge. Well, I say "speeding", but the graphics give more of an impression of lurching down it in short skids. Anyway, the ice caves are in fact another maze, and you have to find your way out before you impale yourself on the icy spikes at the end of every tunnel. Adding to the challenge are the very sluggish controls, which mean you have to start a turn down a side passage approximately three "jerks" before you reach it.

The battle between General Kael and Madmartigan is next, consisting of a garish and very slow Hunchback-style run along the battlements of Nockmaar castle, followed by a jerky sword fight which seems to require little in the way of skill.

If you can get this far there is also a duel in sorcery between Bavmorda and Willow, which takes a similar form to the tune-choosing in part four.

The programmers have tried to recreate the key scenes from the film with little success. There is such a dependence on luck in every part of the game (even the swordfight!) that it just isn't enjoyable to play. The practice option seems like a good idea, but because all the mazes and spells don't change until you reset the whole game, you can find the routes through the dungeons and the ice caverns (after many fruitless and tedious attempts) and then romp through them in quest mode and make the whole thing seem pointless.

AMIGA	
► GRAPHICS	49%
► SOUND	22%
► PLAYABILITY	30%
► VALUE	29%
► **OVERALL**	**33%**

UPDATE . . .

If Mindscape can't use the facilities of an Amiga to produce a good game, the chances for the PC, ST and C64 versions don't look good.

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BIG Screen

Trapped on the twentieth floor of C+VG Towers, Ward R. Street battles terrorists to bring you news of all the latest films.

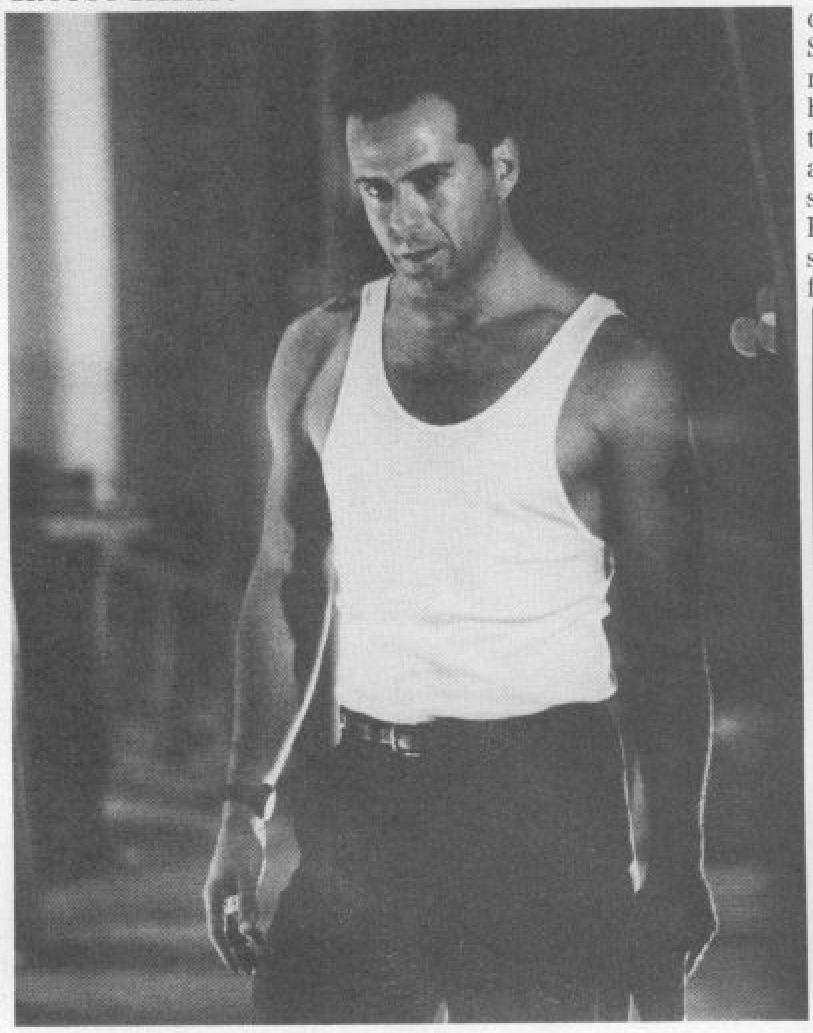
I hate gate crashers. Particularly the sort who invade the office Christmas party, don't bring bottles but do bring Uzis, and tell the guests to **Die Hard** (18). That's hardly festive, guys!

But these unwelcome guests are ruthless international terrorists (boo-hiss) who want six hundred million dollars for their Christmas box and if they don't get it they'll start to blow people away. The very thought gives the captives the willies . . . or rather the Willis – the only man who can help them.

Brucie is an off-duty New York cop who's just arrived in LA to visit his estranged wife. She's taken captive while he's freshening up from his flight in the executive loo, so he remains undiscovered for a while, triggering a classic cat and mouse chase around the near empty building, as he tries to pick off the assailants.

At first he can't even make contact with the outside world – and when he does finally locate a radio there's only one policeman with the sense to believe him. So it's one man against the mob before the SWAT teams get involved and it all builds to a towering inferno of a finale,

There are those who would argue that Bruce Willis is about as versatile an actor as the skyscraper, but his lopsided grin suits his reluctant hero role, even if it's difficult to imagine him ever claiming Arnie's tough-guy crown. Die Hard never reaches quite the top floor as far as I'm concerned, but it's competent fun and there's a computer game version from Activision on the way.



▲ *Bruce Willis is ready to die hard.*

I must admit that I preferred **Maniac Cop** (18) for my monthly dose of police action. It's advertising line is: 'You have the right to remain silent . . . forever!' With a hook like that you don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to tell it's a film of subtlety, wit and charm!

This ludicrous low-budget thriller is from the people who brought you Blue Jean Cop and Q – The Winged Serpent. It stars Bruce Campbell, who has suffered at the rotting hands of the Evil Dead in his time, and it combines bags of energy with a whole mess of fun.

New York is terrorised by a series of brutal murders committed by a shadowy figure in a cop's uniform. When his wife becomes the psycho's next victim, Campbell is made number one suspect and arrested to help calm the public outcry. But of course he's innocent and, with the help of his girlfriend, escapes from jail to discover the true killer . . . a revelation which will scramble your brain if you were expecting logic.

Maniac Cop keeps running with its high powered plot. Unluckily **The Dead Can't Lie** (18) but they don't move very fast either. A pity as this supernatural detective story, with faint traces of Angel Heart, is based on a promising idea.

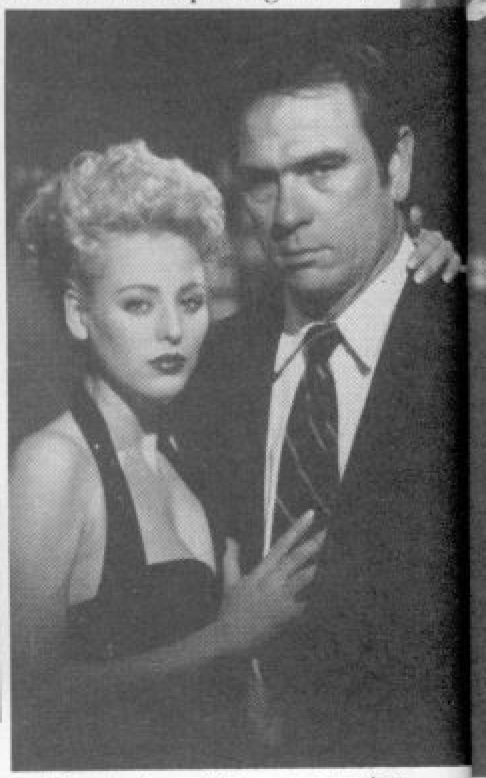
Tought talking 'tec Eddie Mallard is down on his luck – like every other screen gumshoe – so when a client asks him to stop his wife following him, he takes the case. There's just one problem – she's dead. Or is she? When Mallard meets the beautiful spouse she sure seems flesh and blood enough for him to fall in love with.

It's a tale of double-cross, triple-cross and criss-cross – the plot weaves around like a raffia mat. But despite a good performance from stony faced Tommy Lee Jones (Stormy Monday) as Mallard and the delectable Virginia Madsen as the enigmatic missus, the story just moves too sluggishly to hold your attention.

Not so Number Five, the intelligent robot who trundles around the mean streets of the city at top speed, seeking 'input'. Yes, the cute droid is back cuasing more chaos in **Short Circuit 2** (PG) and for once the sequel is almost as much fun as the original.

Five's creator Ben has been reduced to selling toy robots on the street but a chance encounter with Sandy, the buyer from a major department store, gets him a contract for one thousand of the models. It also wins the innocent scientist a new partner, Fred, a street-hustler who is selling fake Rolex watches from the next paving stone.



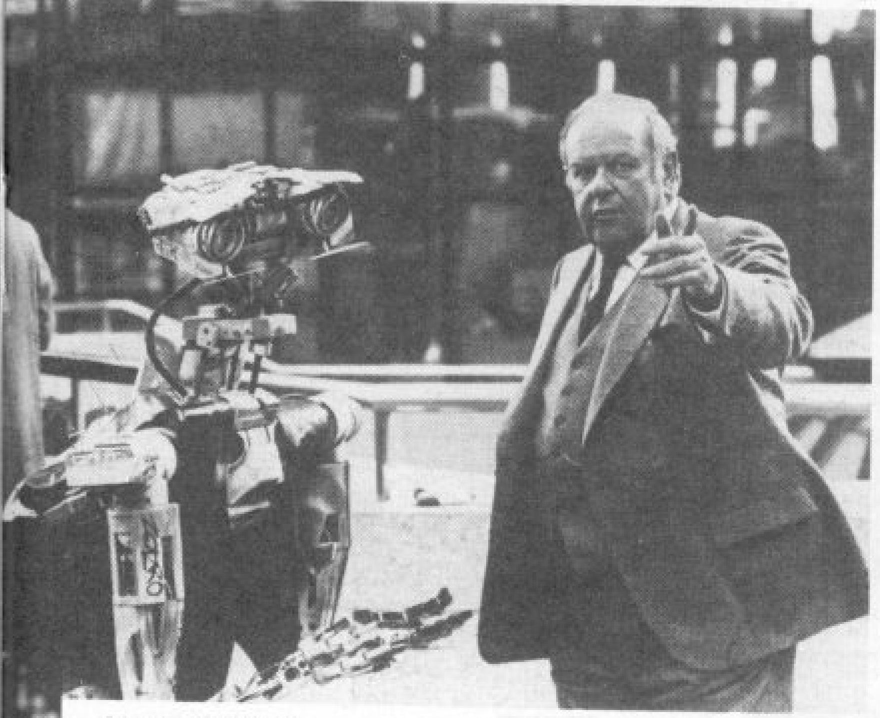


▲ *The dead can't lie – or can they.*



Fred finds Ben a run-down warehouse to use as a factory, not realising that a pair of diamond thieves are using it to tunnel into a neighbouring bank vault – and they certainly don't want a production line invading their privacy.

▼ *No. 5 is back in short circuit 2.*



Masked raiders brandishing pick-axe handles almost persuade Ben and Fred to move out, but in the nick of time a large packing crate arrives outside the door and out rumbles Number Five, now calling himself Johnny and all ready to work, assembling the toys.

Being an inquisitive little robot he's also rather keen to investigate the city as well. But his programming doesn't include street smart and pretty soon he's joined a gang, gone hang-gliding between the skyscrapers, and finally become involved with the diamond robbers. Meanwhile mercenary Fred wants to sell him and Ben is busy trying to date Sandy.

The fast moving plot and wise-cracking script, which has more throw away gags than Kleenex, keep Short Circuit 2 as busy as a 68,000 processor in overdrive. Input amusing, as Johnny Five would undoubtedly say.

▼ *Brucey gets the girl – again.*



From cute robots to cute spirits in **Ghost Chase** (PG). A pair of would-be young film makers inherit a clock which contains the ghost of its former owner's late butler – a ghost who can lead them to a hidden fortune.

Using their special effects skills, the teenagers build the friendly phantom a puppet body, but they are not the only ones after the money, and the chase is on. With half-term approaching, this could keep your kid brother happy for an hour and a half but hard core comedy horror fans have to look elsewhere.



▲ *Yuk – titchy Arthur is back.*

They could try gazing in the direction of **Elvira – Mistress of Darkness** (15). In fact I'd strongly recommed this because the horror show hostess, who sprung to fame in Fright Night, has curves in places where most ghouls don't even have places.

The film is in the Carry On Screaming vein, full of jokes so bad they're good. But unlike those creaky old British comedies, this is almost as well made as its star is well built!

From cute robots to cute spirits in **Ghost Chase** (PG). A pair of would-be young film makers inherit a clock which contains the ghost of its former owner's late butler – a ghost who can lead them to a hidden fortune.

Using their special effects skills, the teenagers build the friendly phantom a puppet body, but they are not the only ones after the money, and the chase is on. With half-term approaching, this could keep your kid brother happy for an hour and a half but hard core comedy horror fans have to look elsewhere.

Trying to raise money for her Las Vegas debut, Elvira receives a telegram telling of an inheritance. But when she reaches the conservative community of Fallwell she finds that her new mansion is a wreck and that the straight-laced citizens don't take too kindly to having a gothic good time gal as their neighbour.

Once she's given her new pet poodle a punk haircut she starts to try some recipes from an old book she finds in the library . . . and the results are inevitably magic. The town picnic is reduced to an orgy when the sober citizens sample her cooking, but retribution is swift as they prepare a witch hunt!

With lots of side-swipes at small town hypocrisy and some deliciously dirty puns, Elvira deserves to be big. Well, she's that already, but go see Elvira's treasure chest (of corny jokes) and let this salacious sorceress set your stake burning.



▲ *Elvira – Ward R Street's new love.*

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Dear YOB,

● Ever since I first bought your magazine way back in 1986 when I had a Spectrum, I had absolutely no hope of being a whizz kid. I didn't even know how to load a game! When I actually realised how to turn it on, I pressed the key and a whole sentence came out! It wasn't really the best computer to start on.

Anyways, I upgraded to a Commodor 64. After it broke down six times, I thought it time to carry on to an ST. I didn't really buy your magazine regularly, but all that changed.

After buying it on the off-chance, I found that it had matured from a baby magazine to a hi-tech bigger one that stood out from the rest, with such terrific features such as Fax, arcade action, glossy pages, compos and in-depth reviews. Well done on an absolutely amazing mag, and I hope it gets better.

Stewart Hopkirk,
Pinner, Middx.

YOB: Thanks for all the compliments, but I'm not sending you a T-shirt, if that's what you're after.

Dear YOB,

● When I was reading the last page but one in Feb's issue of C+VG I saw the line, "C+VG has everything a video games player could ask for". Well, I agree . . .

There isn't too much on one subject, but then again there isn't a lack of information. But I am sorry to say C+VG lacks one thing – a pen pals page. You used to have pen pals adverts in the classified parts, but what's happened to them now? I'd like to see them back in C+VG.

Robert Broughton,
Ripley, Derbyshire.

YOB: Hmmm. I tell you what. If you readers are that interested in having a pen pals section, write in and let me know. If the response is big enough, I'll start including pen pals in these here Mailbag pages – and that's a promise. I must be going soft . . .

Dear YOB,

● I've been reading C+VG for five months, and from what I see, it's very good. However, there is one big problem around which a few more problems revolve. His name is Tony Dillon.

In your December issue he reviewed *Emlyn Hughes International Soccer* and gave it 94% and ten out of ten for its graphics. I hope you are ashamed of yourself, Tony! In the screen shots a block kicks a block on a block into a block, and the caption says "and it's in". That doesn't look like ten out of ten to me.

Now off the sore points. You have an excellent mag. Fax is brilliant, and I'm glad to see that you're reviewing more Amstrad games. Julian Rignall is an ace reviewer and should be given more space.

Darren Finlay,
Wicklow, Ireland.

YOB: Well, Tony does wear glasses – perhaps he lost them that day . . . As for the Rignall beast being given more space – I think he's got far too much already!

Dear YOB,

● Wow! Gasp! I've just seen a programme called Signals, and yes, I saw Eugene Lacey on TV! It was absolutely brilliant.

I was amazed to see him on TV! The programme showed your reviews of computer games! I hope you didn't miss it – I was so amazed that I recorded it! Eugene must be proud of himself.

I don't remember, but I didn't notice you mentioning this in the Feb edition of the mag, did you?

Peter Leung,
Luton, Beds.

YOB: Yes indeed, that was our esteemed Ed on the telly – and how could we possibly miss it when Eugene was reminding us every five minutes that he was going to be a megastar. Since the programme was on, poor old Euge hasn't been able to move for autograph hunters and girlies wanting to touch his bottom. Bah!

Dear YOB,

● I felt I had to write to tell you how much I enjoy C+VG. My fave section (as I own a Sega console) is without doubt Mean Machines. How about doing a breakaway magazine of the same name featuring just consoles. I'm sure that it would prove to be very successful. If not, let's have a larger section in your magazine.

David Thompson,
Tyne and Wear.

YOB: I've just had a quiet word with young spiky Rignall, who runs the Mean Machines column, and he says there's "something rather special" planned for Mean Machines later in the year.

Dear YOB,

● I own a C64 and my friend has a Sega. Later in the year I'm going to America and would like to buy software for these two machines.

Could you advise me whether software bought in America is compatible with UK machines.

S. Cowley,
Belvedere, Kent.

YOB: Apparently, American Sega games aren't compatible with UK machines, so don't even think about buying US Sega games. As for C64 software – that's a bit dodgy, I'm afraid. Some games might work, but others won't.

Dear YOB,

● Please could you give me some information on the Atari XE. What games can I get for it, and around how much do they cost?

Ian Evans,
Llantwit Major, S. Glam.

YOB: The Atari XE is compatible with all Atari XL software – and there's a very big library out there. Most of the ROM cartridges available for the XL/XE are old arcade games, but good ones include Robotron 2084, Joust, Star Raiders and Gyruss. Other ROMs include Rescue on Fractalus,



Ballblazer, Zenji, River Raid and Montezuma's Revenge – all of which are outstanding.

Dear YOB,

● I have some tips that will improve your mag beyond all recognition:

1. More colour reviews.
2. Assign a whole page to the charts.
3. Introduce a previews section.
4. Cut down on advertisements.
5. Put a list of reviews on the contents page.

If you put all these points right, your mag will be even more perfect than perfect.

Oliver Selway,
Chilton, Bucks.

YOB. We might be seeing more colour reviews in the not-too-distant future – keep watching. I think a whole page of charts would be boring – do the rest of you agree? Who needs a preview section when we've got Fax? Cutting down on adverts would mean putting the cover price up to about five pounds – mind you, we could get rid of Garry Williams if we had no ads . . . we've already got a reviews contents page – can't you even be bothered to turn to that?

Dear YOB,

● So you've finally managed to squeeze the adventure section down to nearly nothing. This is bad, but what's worse is that the Fiend has been out of the mag for four issues. The Fiend has and always will be the best part of the mag for me, so do yourselfs and us a favour and return him to the mag, otherwise you'll incur the wrath of the Fiend!

Martin Lyons,
Belfast, N. Ireland.

YOB: I think the Fiend is a wet nelly who wears women's underwear. Still, if you can get a petition together, send it in and if you have over 1,000 names on it, we'll think about bringing him back. Maybe.

Finally, here's what you'll been waiting for – the results to the "I've got a joke for Garry" comp. I've decided to print a selection, so funny were the entries, so sit back and have a good long laugh at the great fat Williams' expense.

● Garry Williams and Eugene Lacey were running in a race. Euge ran in short bursts, while Garry ran in burst shorts.

Paul Harrison,
Kent.

When Garry was born, his Mum was awarded a VC.

Andrew Wilson,
Bonville, Australia.

Garry Williams: You look like a famine!
Jaz: You look like the cause of one.

David Beech,
Congleton, Cheshire.

Garry Williams is so fat, he's got more chins than a Hong Kong telephone directory.

Jason Quinn,
London SW16 2UW.

What's the fastest thing on two legs? Garry Williams with a luncheon voucher.

Mike Murray,
Berkhamstead, Herts.

Garry Williams was invited to a fancy dress party, so he went on a six-week crash diet so he could go as sumo wrestler.

D. Texeira,
25 Engr Regt, BFPO 36.

And the winner of the stonking good C + VG shirt is . . . Mike Murray! It's in the post. By the way, I did have some other jokes, but unfortunately they're unprintable – but thanks anyway to Matt Thurlow of Basildon, Essex, John Evans, Ammanford, Berks and Geoff Taylor of Inverness.



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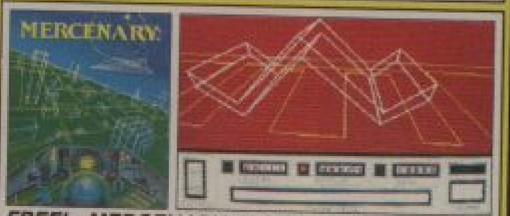
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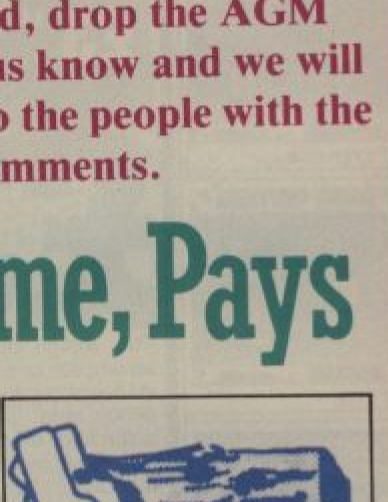
Do you already own a computer
If so, which one do you own? ....

AGM

Welcome to AGM. This month sees lot's of news, a review of DC Comics latest epic release, another exclusive C + VG PBM competition plus reviews of more FRP games. So what do you think of the new format? It doesn't matter if your views are good or bad, drop the AGM column a line to let us know and we will send a few freebies to the people with the most constructive comments.

It's a Crime, Pays

The C + VG game of *It's A Crime* has finally come to an end! It was a hard fought, back-stabbing, vicious game, with diplomacy being the key factor. This said everybody had a great time and really enjoyed themselves. The results and the prizes are as follows:



▲*It's a crime – the winners.*

Overall winner THE GODFATHER – MARK SEARING.

Mark wins one totally free game of It's A Crime, 98 free credits – worth 75p each – to spend as he wishes in any KJC Game, a year's subscription to First Class KJC's PBM magazine plus both Crime + C + VG T-shirt.

Runner Up THE CAPO – BILL LONGLEY.

Bill wins: 66 free turn credits, and a Crime and C + VG T-shirt.

Other winners: Loyal Gang Members.

HARRY BOND 12 Free Credits + Crime and C + VG T-shirt.

JAN THRESHER 6 Free Credits + Crime and C + VG T-shirt.

PAUL LEWIS 26 Free credits + Crime and C + VG T-shirt.

FRANK G. DAHNCKE 6 Free Credits + Crime and C + VG T-shirt.

ANDREW ISSACS 18 free credits + Crime and C + VG T-shirt.

DAFYDD PRITCHARD 16 free credits + Crime and C + VG T-shirt.

If any readers are interested in starting up another C + VG game of It's A Crime, KJC are willing to put up the same prizes if they get enough response. All you have to do is drop a line to KJC Games, PO Box 11, Cleveleys, Blackpool, Lancs, FY5 2UL. Your start up package, including rule book and two turns are totally free and new, totally inexperienced players are always welcome.

A wide range of PBM Games are available to C + VG readers at reduced cost. If you send a large s.a.e. to AGM at the address listed on the contents page we will be glad to send you the information.

The Invincible O...

Many years ago – when FRP was very much in it's infancy – a group of players formed a company called The Judges Guild and released a FRP supplement called The City State Of The Invincible Overlord. It received wide critical acclaim throughout the hobby and was used by GM's all over the world for years on end. However, due to the expansion of the FRP hobby, it became outdated and was superseded by various other products.

However now, American FRP giants Mayfair games, have had the whole system re-written, up-graded and re-packaged and it is back bigger and better than ever! The actual City State module itself costs £14.95 and contains everything a budding GM could want.

The beautifully designed box set contains the guide to a whole city – including a source book, city map, world map and many other unique items – and it is especially designed to fit in with any FRP system that you play – be it


▲ *Overlord – valve packed role pla...*

Merps Re-Release

After the enormous success Virgin/Mastertronic's *Middle Earth* computer game Iron Crown Enterprises, have decided to re-vamp and re-launch their "Middle Earth Role Playing System" (MERPS).

For the record, the MERP's role playing system is generally acknowledged to be one of the top gaming systems in existence, and although quite simple to play, it is very realistic. Furthermore, it has a tremendous amount of supportive material, which is well written and immensely entertaining.

The game itself is designed to introduce people to Fantasy Role Playing in the world of JRR Tolkien's Middle Earth. It is suitable for those who have never before played a FRP game, as well as the more experienced players who are looking for an original, easy going system.

The MERP's system contains the complete rules for handling most of the common situations that arise in FRP games plus a variety of tables that add a great deal of flavour and detail to the game, without



▲ *Tolkien board games – re-release...*

stopping the "playability" element.

The game is being released in two formats; a boxed set and the solitary stand alone rule book.

The boxed edition sells for £9.95 and is beautifully packaged, as the artwork is just out of this world. For your money you receive the MERP rule book, a 32-page introductory adventure booklet, a 16-page layout booklet, a set of full colour stand up characters and the relevant dice.

le Overlord is Back



playin

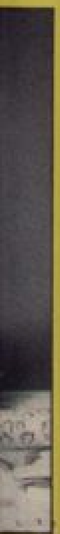
AD + D or Warhammer Fantasy Role Play.

There is even an introductory scenario called "To catch a thief", which gives potentially new GM's an easy adventure to run, especially if it is their first time. Needless to say the adventure can be beefed up a bit if the GM is an old hand at the game.

Released alongside the main box are three separate adventures called: The Raiders Of Ironrock, The Wraith Of Derric's Deep and The Haunt. All of these adventures are superbly boxed and contain 32-page scenario booklets, full colour maps and various charts and tables. The Haunt even contains a very useful, well designed Games Master screen – which stops other players looking at your notes and cheating.

Each adventure costs a very reasonable £6.95 and are tremendous value for money. Look out for full reviews of these products in up and coming issues of C + VG. No true FRP'er should be without them!

e



ased.

Dungeon Master Demand!

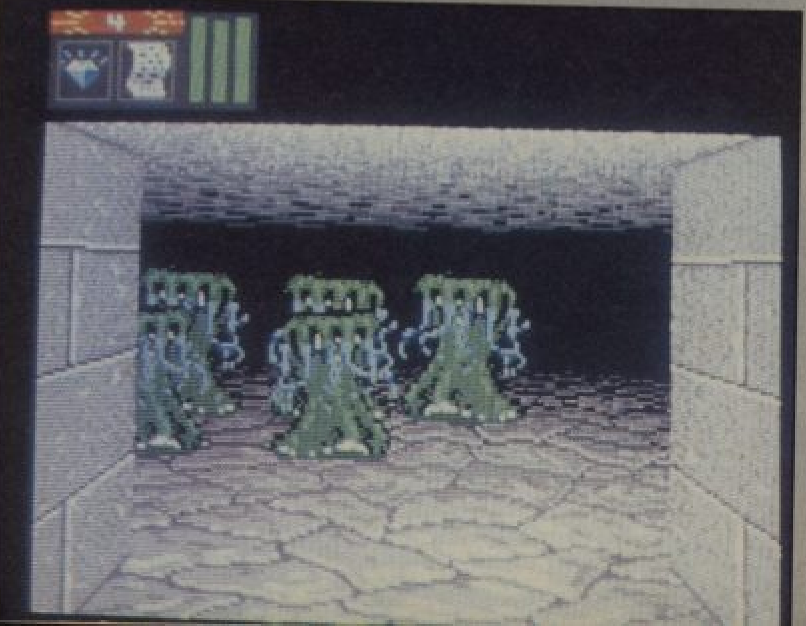
Due to the massive popularity of *Dungeon Master* – the role playing computer game which helped change the who computer market – FTL has been working both night and day to finish the new additional lower levels.

The latest news from the FTL camp is that the long awaited follow up – which is called *Chaos Strikes Back* – should be in the shops next month. Chaos adds five extra levels to the existing Dungeon Master and carries on from where the original finished off. Apart from a whole new range of fiendish traps, devilish devices and deadly monsters, the new disks will contain a feature called the portrait editor, which will allow the player to totally change the appearance of their party.

Chaos will initially be available on the Atari ST, and this time the Amiga version will not be far behind.

FTL are already working on *Dungeon Master II,* which is set in space and involves aliens, ray guns, space ships and interplanetary teleporters as well as other, more original Sci Fi equipment. The release date for this is anticipated to be the end of 1989.

▼ *Dungeon Master – the sequel is near.*



Galdregons Domain



▲ *The Warriors of Goldregon.*

Goldregons Domain casts you in the part of a devil may care barbarian. The type of hardened adventurer who will take on any challenge if the price is right.

In the city of Secnar King Rohan offers you such a challenge. Retrieve the five stones of Zator.

These magical stones have of late fallen under the control of of the evil wizard Azazael. It is Azazael's intention to use the stones to enslve mankind – only you can save the world.

This full blooded role playing game has been put together by Midlands based Pandora. It features many standards RPG details such as lists of strengths and weaknesses of other characters, the ability to question people you meet in the Ins and taverns along the way, and many special weapons like the Great Two Handed Sword of the Stone Giants and the Daggers of Quarx.

The graphics look very promising even if they do owe a slight debt to Dungeon Master. Full review next month.

The Superb Ultima



▲ *Lord British performs.*

The superb Ultima range of Role Playing Games have recently been achieving great success in Japan and America on the Nintendo system.

Origin's larger than life boss – Lord British as he calls himself, recently staged an Ultima play at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas to promote the new versions.

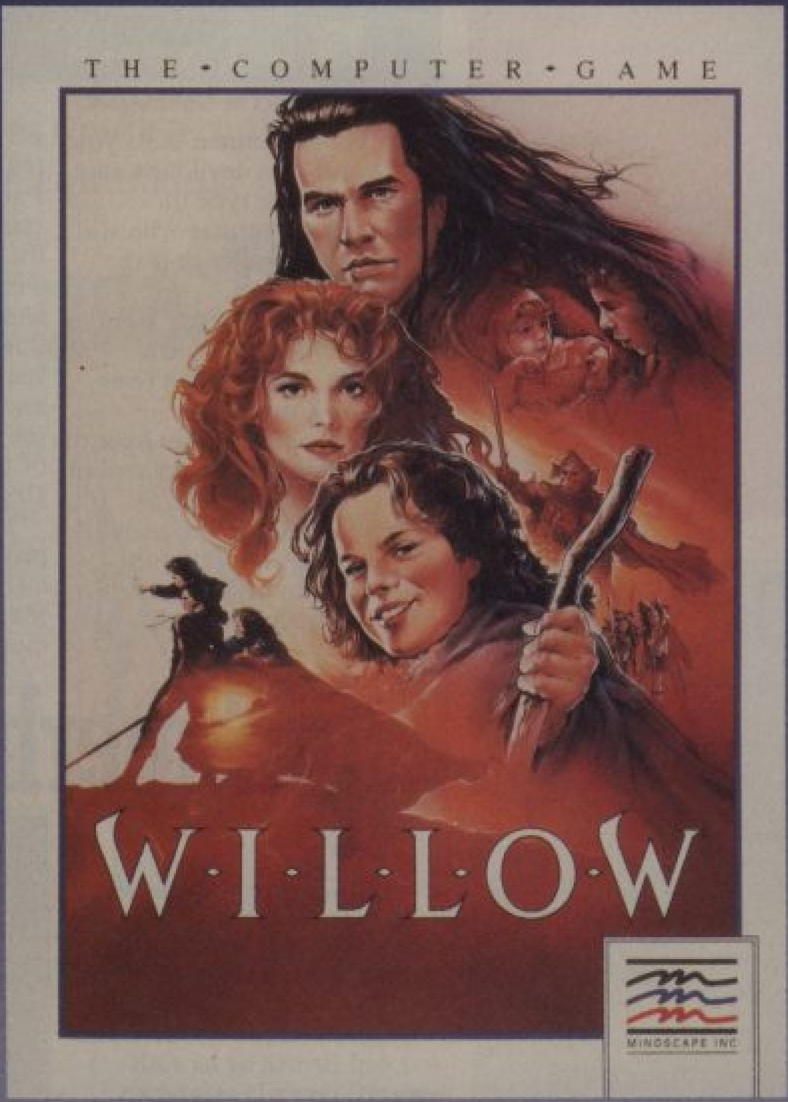
The cameo performance was staged at regular intervals throughout the show and drew large crowds to the origin stand at the show. Featuring swash buckling sword fighting, the hand of a fair maiden and a knighting ceremony starring Lord British himself it proved a great success with the show goers. The things they do to sell those RPG's. The Ultima series of games are available in the UK from Microprose.

AGM

W·I·L·L·O·W™

Enjoy it to the hilt—at home!







The castle is dark. The drafts from the open turret behind you are cold. Seated at your computer, you have entered another time. When unlikely heroes fought for the survival of all that was good. When magic was real.

You have joined the battle, not as a bystander, but as a *participant*. And you have 7 adventures to conquer. Ever fought with a sword? Been lost in a labyrinthine dungeon? Or cast a spell?

Digitalized illustrations from Lucasfilm's masterwork, plus high resolution graphics make this game a heart-stopper. Just a joystick, a mouse or a few keystrokes is all you need to play.

Will you defeat the evil queen? Depends. How strong is your spirit? How pure is your heart? How powerful is your magic?

MINDSCAPE INC

M I N D S C A P E

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As one official C + VG PBM competition comes to an end, another begins. This month you can join in another PBM game, which holds a lot of prizes for the winners including trophies, free turns and T-shirts. And how much does it cost to start? Why, absolutely nothing of course! Wayne explains . . .

Crisis has always been *Mystery And Adventure Games* most popular game, but it suffered from various limitations and was so easy to play, that after a player had played it once, it was hardly worth playing again.

However, *Mystery And Adventure Games* boss Colin Kilburn decided that improvement was called for, and the outcome was *Crisis II*, which I have been keenly playing since it's launch six months ago.

Crisis II is a game of global domination, but contains additional twists. For a start, the game has been expanded to cater for 20 players and is based around 134 different countries. Of these 124 are computer-controlled and the computer plays the game as much as the players do!

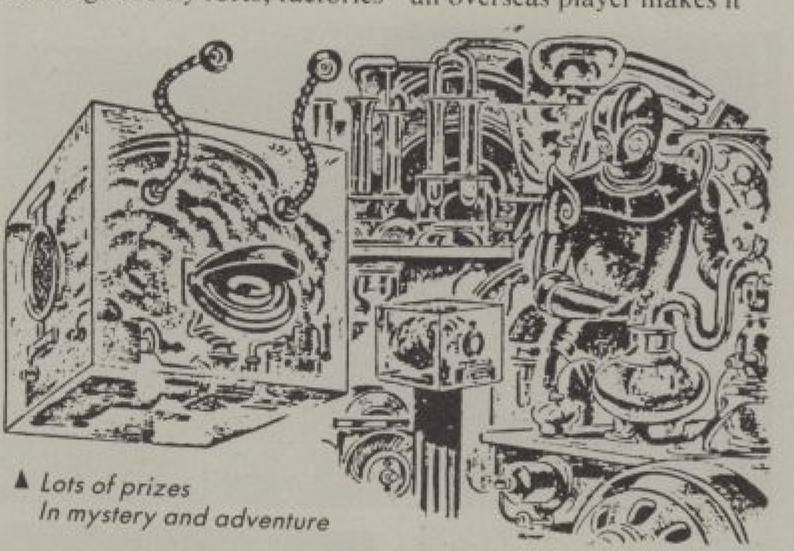
The idea behind the game is to create wealth for your nation – by either building factories or taking over other countries by force – and put it in a position where it has a mass of nuclear weapons, thereby dictating your terms by force of arms. However, if your countries population is reduced to zero, or you lose a battle in your home country you are out of the game.

The player has to make the decision whether or not to spend the nation's wealth on forts and factories or troops and weapons. Other decisions to be made include the outcome of a potential invasion, the launching of nuclear missiles and the allocation of spies.

Players can now issue up to 20 orders per turn if they wish and apart from attacking opposing nations with armoured Divisions, a player can call upon paratroopers to use accordingly.

Another new addition is the introduction of radiation levels. If players get a bit "button happy" and rain nuclear weapons upon their neighbours, then they could find that this backfires against them! Nuclear weapons that land increase the radiation levels in various pre-designated areas so you could find your population decreasing rapidly, so much so that you can effectively eliminate yourself from the game!!

Other new touches include continental bonuses for the control of large areas of terrain and specialist spies – who can sabotage enemy forts, factories and nuclear missiles.



▲ *Lots of prizes In mystery and adventure*

Crisis II is so different from the original version it is virtually a different game in itself! It is so much more realistic, detailed and organised, that two games are never alike.

One facet of the game I am glad hasn't changed is the diplomacy angle as contacting other players in the game is a must if you are going to get anywhere. Contact can initially be made by writing to other players via the GM, but it is advisable to write to them direct as soon as humanly possible, because a delay could mean the destruction of your nation. This said back stabbing, double dealing and treachery are commonplace, so remember the golden rule: "Trust no-one but yourself!"

Right, on to the competition, *Mystery And Adventure Games* have kindly agreed to run a knock out version of *Crisis II* especially for C + VG readers only! The eventual winner will receive the "Crisis + C + VG shield", which will be engraved with the winner's name, as well as a load of free turn credits and C + VG T-shirt. The runners up will also receive free credits and T-shirts.

Mystery And Adventure Games will set up as many games as it takes to cope with the C + VG readers. Dependant on the response either the last five or ten remaining countries will go through to the next round until there is the final game. The winner – or winners, as the game can be won by an alliance – will receive the prizes to do with as they wish.

Overseas players need not worry, as there will be special games set up for them, with extended turn deadlines. When an overseas player makes it through to a game involving British players, the game's deadlines will be especially extended once again.

To initially participate in this C + VG version of *Crisis II* costs nothing. Just write to *Mystery And Adventure Games*, 15 Fairview Crescent, Harrow, Middlesex HA2 9UB including a large ssae and proof of purchase. You will then receive the following totally free; a rulebook, start up sheet , large world map and three FREE TURNS. You can't argue with that can you!

Future turns are a reasonable £1.50, and the game usually has a ten-day deadline for British players.

Other free PBM offers available to C + VG readers at the present time are listed below. Please make sure you send a s.a.e. when writing off, unless otherwise stated, or you more than likely won't get a reply. Sloth Enterprises, PO Box 82, Southampton SO9 1BH.

The main offer here is a free rulebook, start up, and two free turns in *Spiral Arm II*, a fast action space wargame, where diplomacy and tactics are essential. Sloth are also making the same offer for *Gameplan*, their American football PBM. They also have two other special offers on their other games *Kings Of Steel* and *Saturnalia*, but you will have to write to them direct for further details, as they do not want me to make them known publicly.

- KJC Games, PO Box 11, Cleveleys, Blackpool, Lancs FY5 2UL.

PBM giants KJC are giving away free rulebook, set-ups and two free turns for both of their best selling games, *It's A Crime* and *Trolls Bottom*. Meanwhile, KJC are also allowing C + VG readers to join their other games, Warlord, Earthwood, State Of War and Capitol at a special rate. Contact KJC for further details. No ssae required.

- Spellbinder Games, PO Box 60, Wath-Upon-Dearne, South Yorkshire, S63 7PR.

This company will be no stranger to the C + VG readers, as they have come up with some great offers in the past and, believe it or not, they still stand. Yes, you can join the following games for absolutely nothing and get a rulebook, start up and various free turns in the following games; *Keys Of Bled, Kickabout, Kingdom* and *Spiral Arm II*. All the aforementioned are almost totally computer moderated. Please note that you are allowed to apply for a maximum of TWO of the above Spellbinder games on offer per person.

Finally, here is an offer you can't refuse!! If you have a PBM problem, enquiry, question or query, drop me, Wayne, a line, care of C + VG, 30-32 Priory Court, Farringdon Road, London EC1, enclosing a s.a.e. and I will do my level best to help you.

AGM

AGM

KEITH CAMPBELL'S WRITE-IN

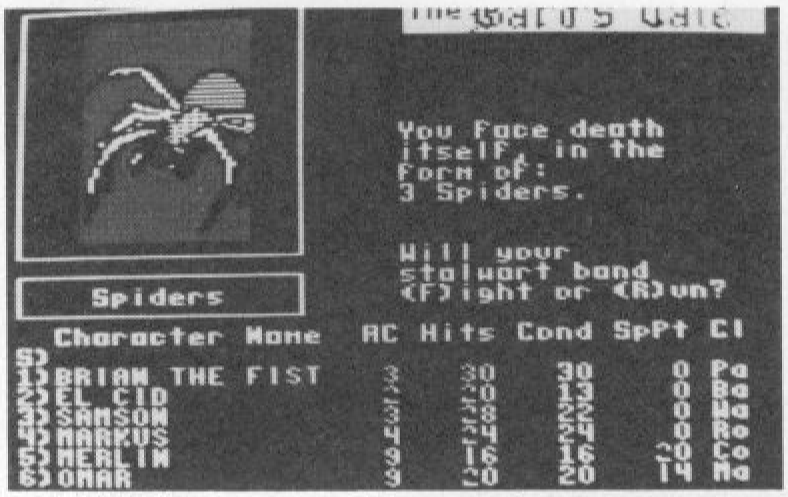
Helpline Clues

Keith guarantees to answer all letters sent to the Helpline – even if we can't help we'll acknowledge your letter.

Frankenstein is a game that consistently maintains its position in the Helpline ratings, and this month is no exception! How can Leslie Brady, of Hull, get into the dwellings or the cabin, in part three of the game? Also in part three, Henrik Pekkala wants to cross the valley, but doesn't know how to use the cable car. "And where is everybody?" he asks.

Who knows of a game called *Pandora?* Jason George from Malanda in Queensland knows it only too well, and is trying to discover the self-destruct code. To be more accurate, he knows what the code is, but cannot locate the necessary yellow code card. He would also like to know which ID card will allow him to escape from the spaceship when he has set the self-destruct code. Hmmm, good thinking, Jason, but I can't even begin to help on this one, on account of never having come across the said game! Any offers out there.

Peter Backgren writes from Helsinki with a major problem in *Bard's Tale II.* His trouble spot in Dungeon 7, Destiny Stone, level one. An old mage saying "Tell me what the PLAN is, or you are going nowhere," has Peter and all his friends completely stumped. They have tried out dozens of



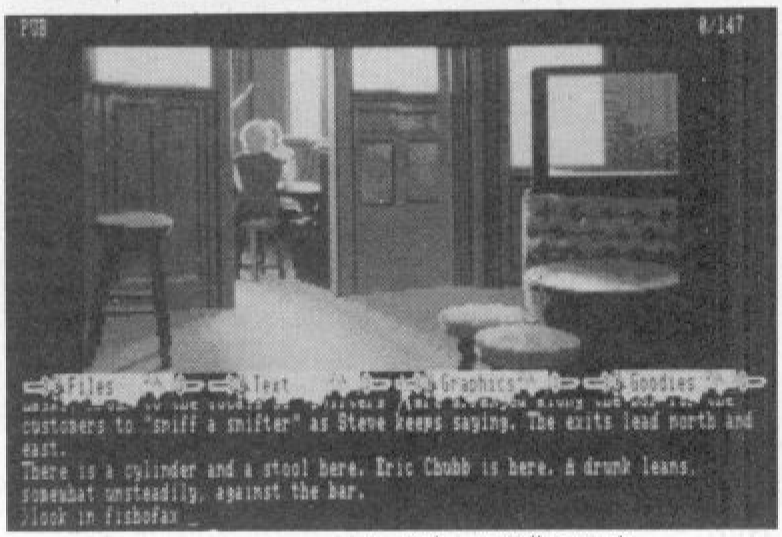
▲ *Bard's Tale – causing grief.*

words, and come to the conclusion that either they are stupid, or the game has a lousy vocabulary. "While I'm at it," continues Peter, "perhaps one of your readers might know how to cheat in the casino and manage to keep the money, in *The Tracer Sanction?"*

"In *The Bard's Tale"* for the Amiga, how do you go up levels, and where is the Review Board?" writes Vernon Amos, all the way from Suva, in the Fiji Islands. Vernon and his friend had found quite a few magic items by the time he wrote, and having gained about 6,000-8,000 experience points, they are surprised that they cannot find the Board. Also, they would like to know what effect the Lok's lyre has?

Who would like a tough adventure problem to crack, to help reader Tony Dillworth out? Tony, from Leamington Spa, has been playing a non-mainstream version of *Colossal Cave,* of unknown origin. Many of his problems and solutions do not line up with any well known version of the game. So if you're familiar with *Colossal,* have a way with adventure problems, and have access to an IBM type PC, then drop me a line. The first suitable candidate will get Tony's notes, plus a disk with both the game and Tony's saved positions on it.

Every month I have a free subscription to the Adventurer's Club Ltd to award to a worthy adventurer. This month the prize goes to RGB Marshall, of Congleton in Cheshire, whose complete solution of *Manhunter* arrived before the game had actually been released. RGB imported the game direct from the USA, at a cost of about £50. "But for that I've had nearly a week's entertainment. Much better value than either *Fish* or *Lancelot.* Sierra are a vastly underrated software house who deserve infinitely more praise than that heaped on the likes of Pathetic Roles et al."



▲ *Fish – scrolls puzzle.*

If you have an adventure problem, or can help someone who does, please drop me a line – Keith Campbell, C+VG Adventure Helpline, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

CORRUPTION
If you are going somewhere where there is a risk of losing your possessions, put them in the BMW beforehand. Get Theresa's phone at 12.10 to hear an interesting conversation.

MANHUNTER
When the trail goes cold have a triple flush!

FISH
Find a dry route while the cast is cooling.

LANCELOT
If your opponent is invisible, take away his adventage!

Letters

Dear C+VG

Many thanks for your splendid new (minority?) section the likes of which I have never seen before. Being a smigen over 30 the old reflexes aren't what they used to be, so I find that role playing games suit me to a T.

I am really enjoying Heroes Of The Lance – but I have one problem – killing hatchling Dragons! How do you do it?

Also, is Pools Of Radiance out on the ST yet – I ordered it from US Gold in November.

D. Holman,
Barrow-In-Furness, Cumbria.

Editors reply: The way to kill the young Dragons is to arm yourself with a shield, which will protect you from their acid breath, and then push them to the edge of the screen. Once there, position your character – Flint the dwarf is best – in such a way that the acid breath goes over the characters head and then hack away at it's back legs. And if you thought they're bad, you should wait until you get to fight the large Black Dragon! A hint here – keep Goldmoon alive and use her wisely.

By the way, this minority is slow but surely on the way to becoming a majority!

As for Pools being released on the ST – US Gold are still awaiting for the converted game with bated breath. However, if ST version is proving to be so big that it cdould be on four disks! Hopefully it should be out around mid-April.

Dear C+VG

Congratulations on a fantastic magazine! AGM really is the icing on the cake.

Since I've been reading your magazine I discovered PBM and am really interested in joining in with what looks like fantastic hobby. However, please can you help me with the following problems:

1) How do I join Epic II – The Kings Game?

2) Are there any extra charges for overseas players like myself?

P Wilhelmus,
Maastracht, Holland.

Editors reply: Glad you like the AGM column Will – it's going from strength to strength! In answer to your questions:

1) Contact Steve Upton, c/o Rhann Postal Games, PO Box Sarisbury Green, Southampton SO3 6YL.

2) Yes! But these vary from game to game. When you write to Steve, he will explain all.

Dear C+VG

I first read about FRPG computer games in AGM and my interest has grown to such an extent that I cannot resist them any more. However, I have a problem in that I cannot buy them over here in Spain, so could you please tell me how I can get my hands on them?

I also want to play some computer FRPG's for a C64 with datacassette, but once again I can't get hold of them in Spain, so what do you suggest?

Alfedo Dominguez,
Madrid, Spain.

Editors reply: The best people to contact re FRP games are: Games Of Liverpool, 81 Victoria Street, Liverpool L1, UK. They are one of the largest and most efficient companies when it comes to exporting games to overseas players and they also have a large, independent catalogue.

The best way to obtain Computer FRPG's is to write direct to the companies that produce them. As US Gold and Origins produce the majority of computer FRPG's you could drop them a line – their addresses are somehwere in the magazine – but I don't believe they do much for datacassettes. I know that Electronic Arts have the Bards Tale series on tape, so you may well wish to contact them as well.

Dear C+VG

"Are there any fantasy sports games which I can get into?"

Keith Miles,
Grays, Essex.

Editors reply: "You could try "Bloodbowl", which was reviewed in C+VG's November issue, or if you want something really different try "Circus Maximus", which contains the rules for Roman sporting events. The games range from chariot racing, which is great fun to discuss throwing, which isn't!! It sells for about £3.95, but you'll need to provide your own models and ground surface.

Mind you, if you want gladitorial sports set in the future, try Circus Imperium from Fasa, the makers of the mighty Battletech. Here you have anti-Grav chariots, pulled by Lion type beings, which are controlled by drivers who have gladiator co-drivers who provide the offensive power. It will be reviewed in C+VG soon so keep your eyes peeled!

Dear C+VG

"Why don't you have a readers classified section where us rabble could swap games, advertise fanzines, get pen pals etc etc?"

Andy Brown,
Clwyed, Wales.

Editors reply: The answer to this is simple. Basically C+VG is a computer mag with a role playing column and not the other way around. Big Euge (otherwise known as the ed to people like you and me) determines what is printed in the mag, and it is up to people like yourself to convince him that the section needs more additions. The ball is firmly in your court.

Dear C+VG

"A long, long time ago I read about a PBM called "Trolls Bottom." It was run by a company called Project Basilisk, but after a thorough search I cannot find any address for them anywhere. As I have just started playing PBM's, because of your column of course, I have decided that Trolls Bottom seems the game for me! Could you please, please give the address of Project Basilisk?"

Mark Bulsher,
Nuneaton.

Editors reply: I get many letters on this subject and there is a little bit of a story to it. Basically, Project Basilisk sold the rights of "Trolls Bottom" to KJC Games, who now are the official moderators of the game. KJC's address is: PO Box 11, Cleveleys, Blackpool, Lancs SW5 2UL and if you apply there you will get 4 free credits and a free start up.

Dear C+VG

"I have just seen some 30 sided dice charts from "The Armoury" in my local hobby shop and I think the whole system will fit very nicely into my campaign. However, the problem is that the shop doesn't sell the relevant dice, so could you give me the address of "The Armoury", so I can encorporate this detailed generation system in my world.

Barry Lofthouse,
Stoke.

Editors reply: The Armory are in fact an American company, who specialise in all kinds of dice. They have over 200 different dice, in all kinds of different shapes, material and sizes. Their only distributor in the UK is a company called Games Of Liverpool, so please send a large SSAE for their catalogue to them at 87 Victoria Street, Liverpool L1 6DG.

Dear C+VG

"I have been playing Battletech for over a year now and I have become fed up with all the cardboard figures enclosed with the game. Is there anything else I could use as figures to enhance the game?"

Steve Brooks,
Ealing.

Editors reply: "Well Steve, your luck seems to be in. FASA, the brains behind the Battletech phenomenon, have recently released a new line of Battletech figures which are available to scale in both plastic and lead versions. As far as I am concerned the plastic figures are both better value for money and have more details. Both figures are available from all good hobby shops, but in case of difficulty, try your local Virgin Games Store as they are definitely on sale there.

AGM

AGM

DC HEROES

► DC HEROES; ROLE PLAYING GAME.
► PUBLISHER: DC COMICS/MAYFAIR GAMES.
► SUPPLIER: GAMES OF LIVERPOOL.
► PRICE: £10.95.
► REVIEWER: WAYNE.

The rivalry between DC and Marvel comics is – and always has been – immense. If one of the aforementioned companied produces a new product, the other isn't far behind with something similar, but for all intents and purposes different. This time it was Marvel who came up with the first comic based role-playing game, when they teamed up with TSR and produced The Marvel Super Heroes Role Playing game.

Not to be outdone, DC promptly teamed up with Mayfair Games and released the DC Heroes Role Playing game a year later. Avid C + VG readers will know that Marvel Super Heroes was reviewed in the August 1988 issue of C + VG and received average markings. So how does the DC version compare?

Well to start off, in the presentation stakes DC wins hands down! The box is much better drawn and is more eye catching.

Once the box is opened, DC win yet again, as they provide the better contents. Basically DC supply more character and Super Hero cards – which are produced on a superior laminated card, large and very useful Games Master screen and five source books, including a quick start rules summary. Furthermore, the two stylish ten sided dice that DC supply are 1,000 times better than the dodgy plastic Marvel equivalent, which are so unreadable you have to colour them in with crayons before you use them.

To get started, you should read the Introductory Quick Start Guide, which explains at great length what a role playing game is, what the Games Master's functions are, and then gradually introduces you to the game itself.

It is quite clear that the DC system is more complex than the Marvel system, and it is more realistic and offers more scope. However, where Marvel score a big plus here is that their rule book is written in a much more player-friendly fashion than DC's and is much more interesting.

You should move on to the Teen Titans solitaire module that allows you to play a Super Hero character AND be the Games Master at the same



▲ Now your super heroes role play.

AES

► PRODUCER: NEW INFINITIES INC.
► SUPPLIER: GAMES OF LIVERPOOL.
► PRICE: £7.95.
► REVIEWER: WAYNE.

It is obvious, even from a cursory glance, to see how great Aesheba really is. The booklet is a unique opportunity for GMs to introduce their players to something totally unique and very, very different.

Basically, the designers have put their collective heads together and buried all the traditional role-playing cliches and have created a totally unexplored continent in the middle of the largest ocean that you can fit into your campaign, and given the culture of Africa Around 300 BC.

They have removed the Nile – thereby preventing the Egyptians from evolving – and re-structured the terrain, while leaving the ecology and climate the same. Finally they have added some immigrants, in the form of Greek explorers who settle on the North coast, then given the whole continent 300 years to intermingle and evolve. The outcome is Aesheba – Greek Africa, both a player's and GM's delight.



▲ Aesheba – sold out in a month.

Players will find it totally different from anything they have ever come across before. The magic system is totally different for a start. Magic in Aesheba is a potent force as it literally keeps the whole of the society together. Magic Users will find that spells they learned in foreign lands have hardly any effect, and that the spell casters in this new land are not to be trifled with. Also, learning the new magic is almost impossible for outsiders, as they have to believe in the Aesheban way of life, including their gods, culture and taboos, before they can even think of studying it.

GMs are also given a whole new range of ideas to play around with. Included in this booklet is a new breed of Non-Player Character Classes, such as Sorcerers, Anti-Witches, Diviners and detectors. Each class has original attributes which would totally throw an unsuspecting party.

This package provides a GM with everything needed to run a long-term campaign. Included are a list of four Greek-style city states, described in such depth that you know who lives in which household, notes on African-style cultures, which have been extensively and fully researched, lengthy descriptions on every important citizen of each area with supporting role-playing character notes and a whole new range of animals and monsters, the like of which player characters would have never have encountered before.

Also included in the package is a large, well-drawn, full-colour map, which makes life decidedly easier. It marks all the more well-known





time. This is an excellent way to get to know the rules and learn the basic game technique. Once you are through with this part of the booklet, you are given a seven-page example of play, which not only explains the rules, but gives you ideas on how to lift stories from comics and use them as scenarios for your players. Regrettably, The Marvel game doesn't contain one of these.

This booklet finishes off with an adventure that a new GM could set up for their players. It contains all you need to run a game and once again involves the Teen-titans for consistencies sake.

The next booklet to read is the Player's Manual. This adds the flesh to the bones of the game and its 39 pages cover AP's in greater depth, explains how to work the combat system – including Combat sequences, types of combat available, armour and special combat rules – and even let's you design your own character, if you desire to do so.

The last booklet you have to read is the massive 96-page Game Master's Manual. This is filled with information and guide lines, which are not hard and fast rules. There is a whole range of handy chapters, which will help all kinds of players from the inexperienced to the veteran FRP'er.

The topics covered are how to create an adventure, subplots, an introduction to the DC universe and its characters, gadgets; ordinary and special, a GM's guide to the most important places – such as Metropolis, Central City, Gotham City and Star City – plus a very handy section called Don't Panic!!

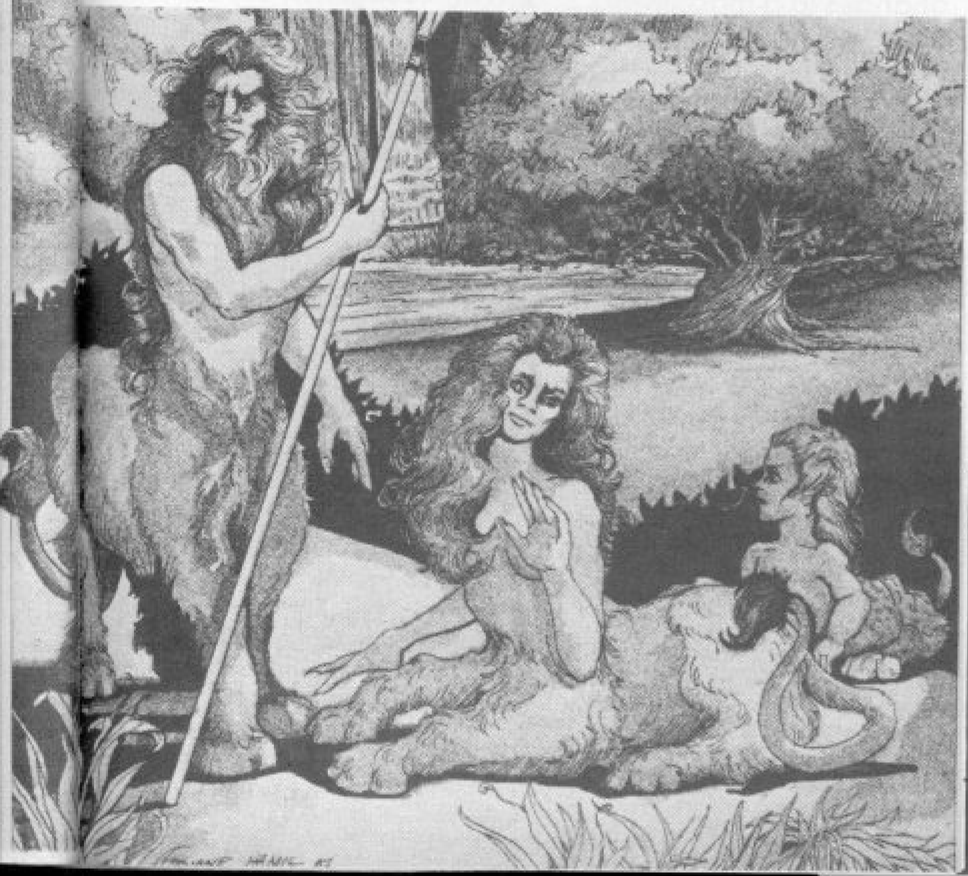
My criticisms of the DC game are that it could have been written in a more entertaining manner, and that street maps or a playing surface of some shape or description should have been included. Apart from these points, the DC system beats its Marvel equivalent hands down. You get the feeling that the Marvel game was designed with children in mind, whereas DC has gone for the older, more mature market. Highly Recommended.

► PLAYABILITY 81%
► COMPLEXITY 86%
► ENTERTAINMENT VALUE 91%
► VALUE FOR MONEY 94%
► **OVERALL 90%**

▼ *DC RPG beats Marvel.*



SHEBA



places, as well as some places of interest a GM may wish to build an adventure around.

It is clear that this gaming supplement was written for GM's. This systemless scenario can easily be slotted into any FRP campaign, but players of AD + D will have an easier time than the others, as it looks as if Aesheba was written with this system in mind.

My advice to any players who may suddenly find themselves on this continent is to take things very slowly. Learn the customs and traditions, get involved with the local people, ask as many questions as you can get away with and DON'T get into any combat situations.

The ideal way to learn about Aesheba is to get involved with the trading side of things. Although this can be quite risky at times, players will find that they are carrying a wealth of trading material on them, such as weapons, gold pices and even trinkets they may have collected on their earlier journeys.

With this as capital they can invest in some trade goods, and travel the length and breath of the country, gathering all kinds of valuable knowledge in the process.

This is – without reservation – one of the most original role playing supplements I have ever seen. It is an essential purchase regardless what FRPG you play. Buy it today!

► COMPLEXITY 64%
► PLAYABILITY 95%
► DESIGN 91%
► VALUE FOR MONEY 96%
► **OVERALL 96%**



▲ *Coney Island – New York's answer to Disneyland.*



MANH

► ACTIVISION/SIERRA ON-LINE.
► IBM PC – £34.99; ATARI ST AND AMIGA – PRICE TO BE ANNOUNCED.
► VERSION REVIEWED: ATARI ST.
► REVIEWER: KEITH CAMPBELL.

It's trendy these days to predict that Adventure games will be swallowed up by RPGs – Role Playing Games.

Well, here's a game that proves the pundits wrong! I can categorically state that the future of Adventure lies with arcade games.

The amount of text is negligible. Input is almost entirely by joystick or mouse, and output is almost entirely graphical. And yet it is a game of clever and subtle puzzles! How can that be achieved? Stay with me, and you'll find out . . .

An alien race called The Orbs, floating eye-like creatures, have invaded New York, and enslaved the entire population. They seem to be busy working on some master plan to make changes in the atmosphere and environment. To keep humans who would sabotage their efforts out of play, they have selected a corps of elite human 'Manhunters'. Human activity is monitored, and when a crime against the Orbs is committed, the record of the criminal's movements just before and just after the crime, made by the Orbs' tracking system, is saved on their central computer. A Manhunter is then assigned to investigate, and run the criminal to earth.

A Manhunter's movements are restricted to places visited by the criminal, and he discovers this through using his own portable computer, nicknamed MAD (Manhunter Assignment Device), which communicates with the Orbs' mainframe. First he displays a map of New York, and watches the criminal's movements across the city. When the target enters a building, MAD zooms in, and shows the target's movements on a detailed internal plan. When the target leaves, the tracking system zooms out, and follows him around town again to his next destination. A further refinement is the ability of the Manhunter to 'tag' any character with whom the criminal comes into contact, during the close-up tracking. Thus he can later access the tracking records for the criminal's associates.


▲ *Manhunter introduces the wacky monks . . .*

On closing down the MAD tracking display, the Manhunter may travel to and investigate the places previously visited by the criminal, by entering TRAVEL mode. Every location where the criminal stopped is highlighted with a flashing light. To travel, the Manhunter moves a marker across the map, positions it over his destination, and presses RETURN. He then moves to the location, which is shown in graphical view.

The same marker appears on this picture, and by scanning the picture with it, anything of interest or importance causes a brief message to appear at the bottom of the screen. For example, if something in the picture can be examined more closely, the marker changes to a magnifying glass when placed over it, and the message 'Press Return to examine' is displayed. The marker can be moved on again without the need to press any key, and will also display, for example, each distinct exit, with an arrow indicating its direction, and a request to press RETURN to move.

This game format seems to be limited to plots with similar scenarios, but then the ability of Sierra to adapt, adopt, and improve, holds out the hope that it may well be employed for other types of stories in the future.

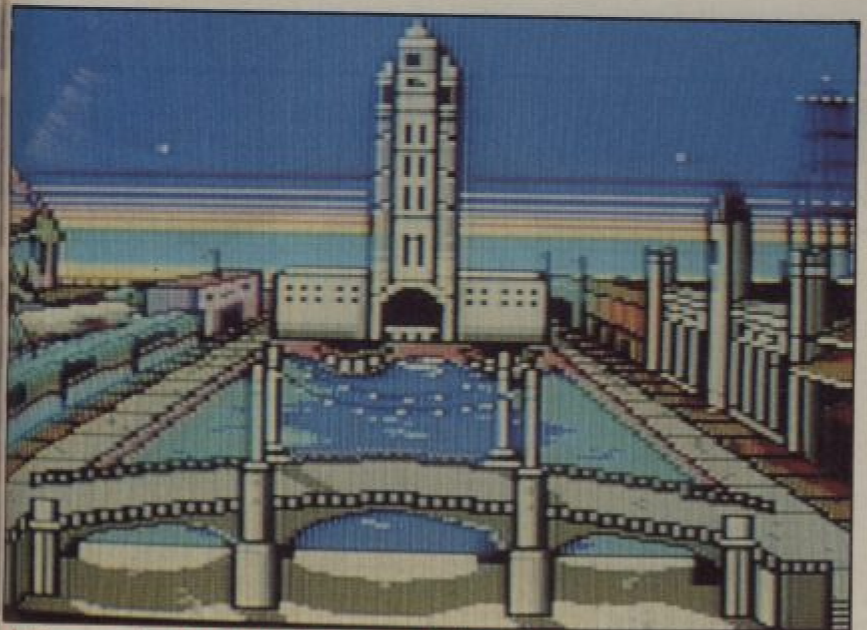
A slick operating system



▲ *Pretty mean gamers they make too . .*



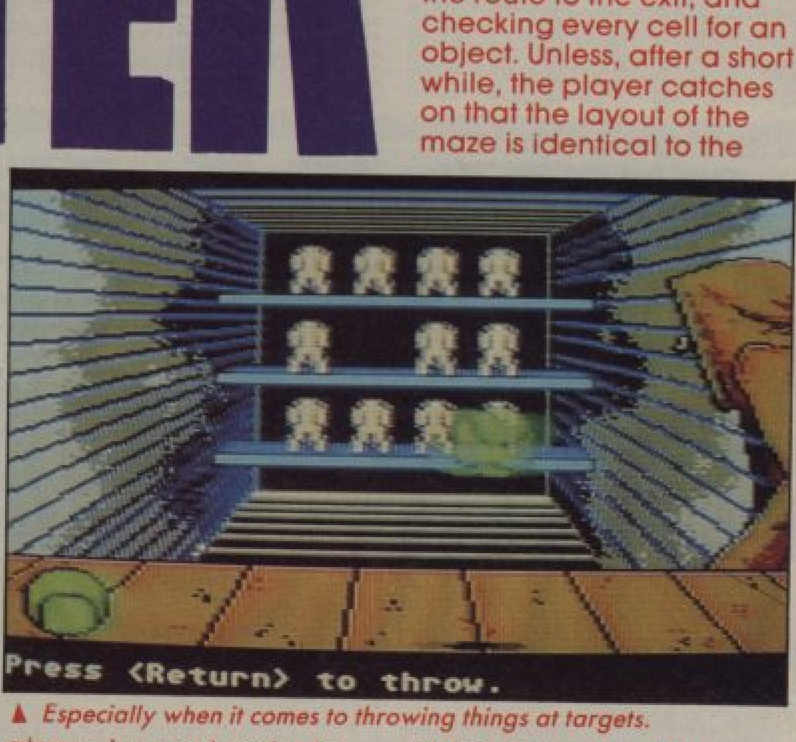
▲ *Manhunter – includes Street Fighter-li*



▲ *Sierra – leaders of the 'new wave' adventure.*

UNTER





▲ *Especially when it comes to throwing things at targets.*



r-like beat'em up for interlude.

alone does not make for interesting gameplay, so what of the puzzles? They are clever and cryptic, with very few overt clues, and the player must be extra observant at all times, making deductions to be able to progress through the game.

For example, the first assignment involves a visit to a bar, and a look at a video machine which the suspect was shown to be taking an interest in. The machine presents an arcade maze game, which is negotiated without touching the maze walls. Every time the player moves onto one of twelve squares containing a mat, a ball is thrown at a set of twelve kewpie dolls at the top of the screen; knocking one out. Not easy to complete, but the feeling persists that it must be played to conclusion. At the end, the player is rewarded with a picture of the funfair at Coney Island.

So why the game?

Following the suspect further, the trail ends in a ladies convenience in Central Park, where there is apparently no exit. Once that problem is solved (unlikely though the answer is!) the Manhunter finds himself in a real maze, shown in 'walk-through' mode. Some locations contain an object. Once the way to plot the maze has been established, it is only a matter of routine finding the route to the exit, and checking every cell for an object. Unless, after a short while, the player catches on that the layout of the maze is identical to the video game, and the objects in it are placed where the mats lie in the video game!

The maze leads to the real Coney Island, and here there is an apparent dead end, for the only exit is to a set of three stalls where the player is invited to test his skills at either throwing darts at balloons, balls at kewpie dolls, or hoops over bottles. The targets in all games are arranged in a four by three grid, and three missiles are offered at each attempt. I will not spoil the puzzle by telling you the answer – suffice to say that the chances of hitting the right answer accidentally are minute. The key lies in the information obtained whilst playing the video game – if you can recognise it as such!

Further arcade sequences follow in other assignments, including a real fight with a crowd of hoodlumns in a back alley, dodging bottles and knives.

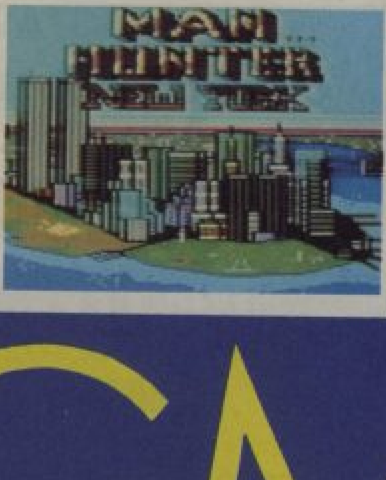
Manhunter is a game that grows on you the more you play it.

I started off distinctly cool, if not bored and frustrated by it. Having persevered with it, I am currently impressed and intrigued by its puzzles, and even becoming a bit nonchalant as I breeze through the occasional arcade section. In fact, I am so taken with it that I am determined to see it through to the end. And that says a lot for a game that is about as far removed from a traditional text adventure as Eugene Lacey is from solving one!

Manhunter is a big game that comes on five disks for the ST – and there are thirteen for the PC version! Therefore it is expensive. But if you like the sound of it, and can afford the price, I urge you to rush out and buy one!

RATINGS

► GRAPHICS	81%
► PLAYABILITY	92%
► PUZZLEABILITY	93%
► ATMOSPHERE	82%
► PERSONAL	93%
► VALUE	88%



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MAJIK

► **MASTERTRONIC**
► **MACHINE: COMMODORE 64 CASSETTE — £1.99.**
► **REVIEWER: KEITH CAMPBELL.**

Here is a cheap and cheerful cassette adventure, that is operated by word-icons. The joystick controls a highlight that is moved across a window of verbs, and depending upon the one chosen, the highlight moves to a list of inventory objects, a list of characters prsent, or the narrative text window, for selection of the rest of the command.

There are graphics at some locations, which are displayed in another window. In non-graphic locations, a text description fills the graphics area instead.

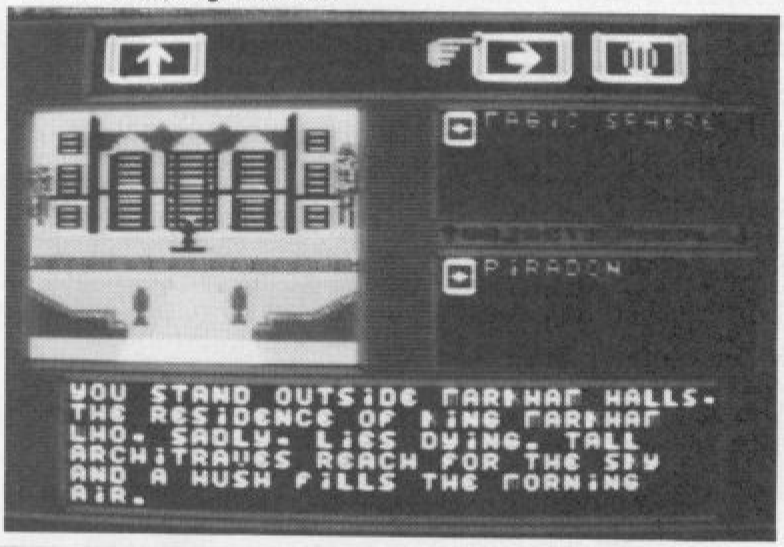
The plot is the rather mundane pseudo-mythological one of hero-magician called to rescue a dying king's son, the only person capable of fighting forces of evil and saving the land.

The verb list is larger than that offered in most current icon adventures, 36 in all, although some are system verbs, and others are near duplicates. No need to grope for an elusive word, or a subtle command though, for they are all there to see. Nevertheless, not bad for the price, and worthy of a recommendation for C-64 adventurers who do not have a disk drive.

RATINGS

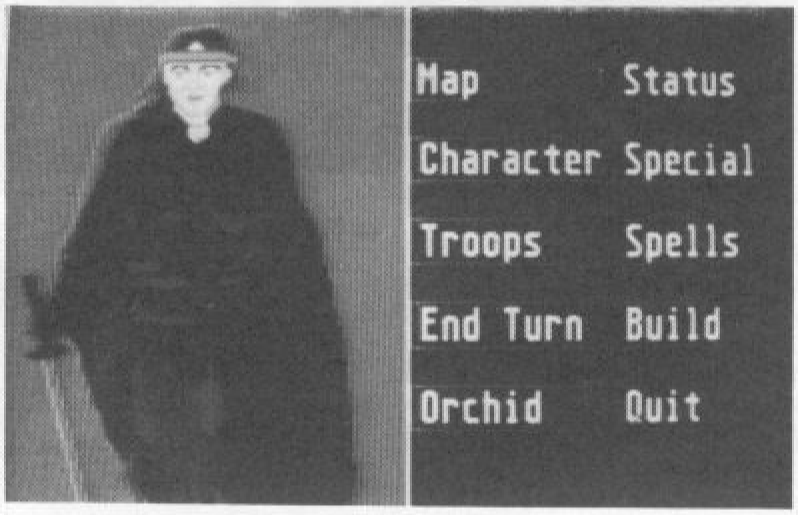
► VOCABULARY	61%
► ATMOSPHERE	60%
► PERSONAL	51%
► VALUE	79%

▼ *Welcome budget release.*



BLACK ORCHID

► **SUPPLIER: MUNDANE SOFTWARE.**
► **PRICE: ATARI ST — £19.99.**
► **AVAILABLE BY MAIL ORDER ONLY FROM MUNDANE SOFTWARE, PO BOX 180, BATH BA1 2WF.**
► **REVIEWER: KEITH CAMPBELL.**



▲ *Digitised music and rousing cheers.*

Although a mail order game, this is no Quilled or GACked home-grown adventure. In fact, it is a fantasy battle game with a strong element of strategy, and a complete absence of puzzles. It is playable for two players, or one-player against the computer.

The land is divided into two domains, connected by a small isthmus. To the left is the citadel belonging to the forces of evil, and to the right, the forces for good. Initially, the program asks whether you wish to play against another person or the computer, and then further options are offered before play commences. You can play an easy or difficult game, and choose between playing the side of Benign or Malign, as well as deciding which sex you want your leader to be.

The main menu offers ten options. MAP enables you to view the terrain, see at a glance which forces control which sectors, and by clicking on it, call up more information about the armies deployed in each sector.

Other commands available are STATUS, CHARACTER and TROOPS, and BUILD.

A battle will ensue if an army has been moved into a sector controlled by the opposing side. These battles take place automatically, and the winning side wipes out all the opposing forces in the sector, taking control of it. It seems there should be some control over the progress of the battle, for at the outset of the game, the player must choose between joystick or keyboard control during battles. When the battle commences, however, neither seems to have any effect, despite a window for each side offering choices of RETREAT and FLEE.

The game is finally won by the side to win control of the base Citadel of the opposing side.

Play is effected entirely by mouse, and full use of windowing is employed. The 'OK' box in the window to close it down, is replaced by a box with a word or phrase suitable to the message in the window. For example, if you make an illegal move, the window telling you this is removed by clicking on a box labelled CHEAT!

An enjoyable game of fantasy and strategy, that comes on two disks.

RATINGS

► GRAPHICS	71%
► SOUND	69%
► PLAYABILITY	80%
► VALUE	80%
► **OVERALL**	**71%**

AGM

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WAR IN MIDDLE EA

► **MACHINES: ATARI ST, AMIGA, SPECTRUM, AMSTRAD, C64, IBM PC.**
► **PRICES: C64, SPECTRUM, AMSTRAD, CASSETTE £9.99, DISK £14.95, ST AND AMIGA £19.99, IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES £24.99.**
► **REVIEWER: EUGENE LACEY.**

Tolkien has proved a fertile ground for game designers. Not just the various officially licensed games from Melbourne House either – the Tolkien esque world of hobbits, elves, wizards, and monsters battling it out in mythical lands has been ripped off for countless adventure games.

Now Melbourne launch a new Tolkien game – five years after their original *Hobbit* adventure topped the Spectrum charts for literally months on end.

War in Middle Earth is a world away from that original Hobbit adventure, with its laterial thinking puzzles and slowly filling in graphics beside certain locations.

War in Middle Earth is much more of a war game-come-role playing game than the earlier Tolkien adventures.

As in the great book itself – the Lord of the Rings – the object in War in Middle Earth is to retrieve the ring – and keep it from the evil Sauron.

You play the part of Frodo Baggins – whose uncle Bilbo Baggins is well known in the Shire for his adventures – the most famous of which saw him discover a ring with strange powers.

In your quest for the ring you are accompanied by three fellow Hobbits, Sam, Merry and Pippin, Aragorn the Ranger, Boromir of Gondor, Legolas, Gimli a dwarf and the great white wizard Gandalf.

The game is played out on a massive scrolling map of the land of Middle Earth.

To examine any area of the map in detail you move the finger cursor to the required location. Press fire and time is suspended whilst you make your move.

The game uses a neat window system to provide additional information about your units. These are represented by shields. You are told several important pieces of information about each unit – and it is important in the game to try and know who is where, what there strength is and where they are going.

Windows also open during the battle sequences – to provide you with information on the enemy and your options. It is not always wise to stand and fight it out.

A further window can be made to open by depressing the fire button twice. This enables you to give instructions to your unit. You have four possible options: Return, Set to Destination – which enables you to send the troop to a specific destination, Set To Join – this orders the unit to join another one, and Set to Follow to follow you.

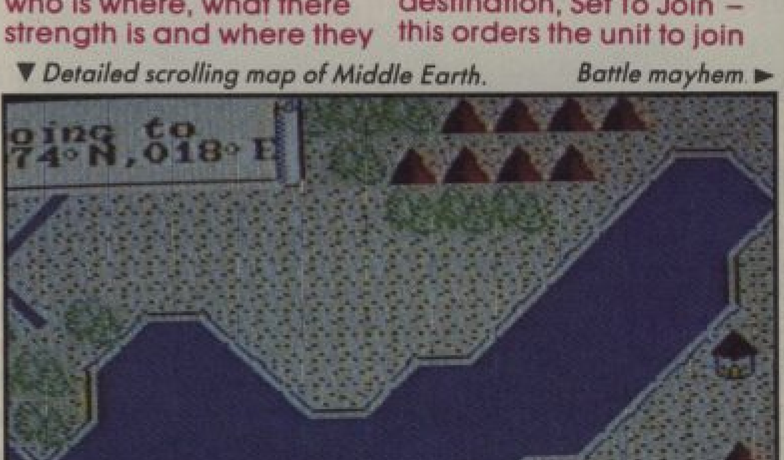
What makes *Middle Earth* more than just a Tolkien war game is the battle sequences. There is no sitting back and watching the computer work out the relative strengths and weaknesses whilst your warriors thrash around. You can directly



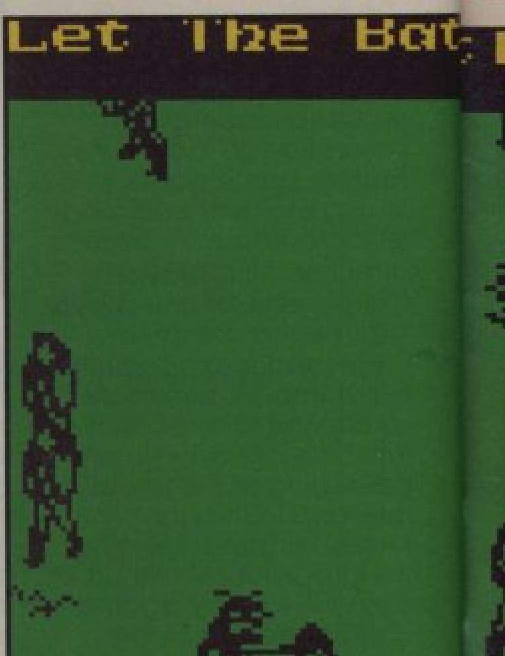
▲*Main menu screen.*



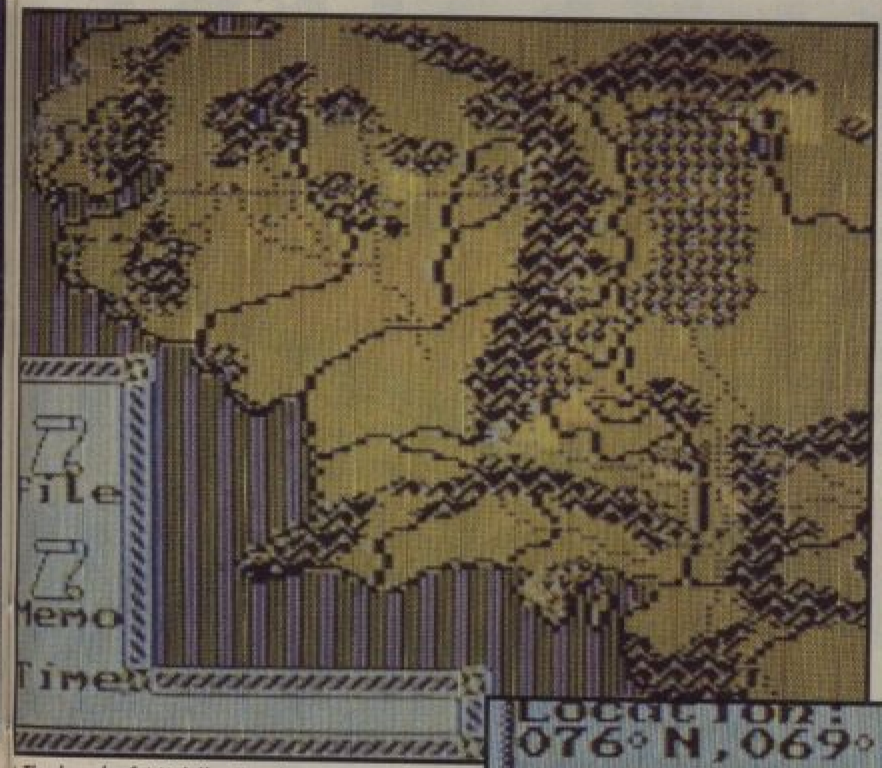
▲ *Th*



▼ *Detailed scrolling map of Middle Earth.*



Battle mayhem. ►



▲The land of Middle Earth – general map.

influence the outcome by skillfully positioning your warriors – picking them up and moving them to skirmishes where your men are losing the edge. It is close hand-to-hand fighting – just as Tolkien describes it in the books.

War in Middle Earth is as much a race against time as a strategic challenge.

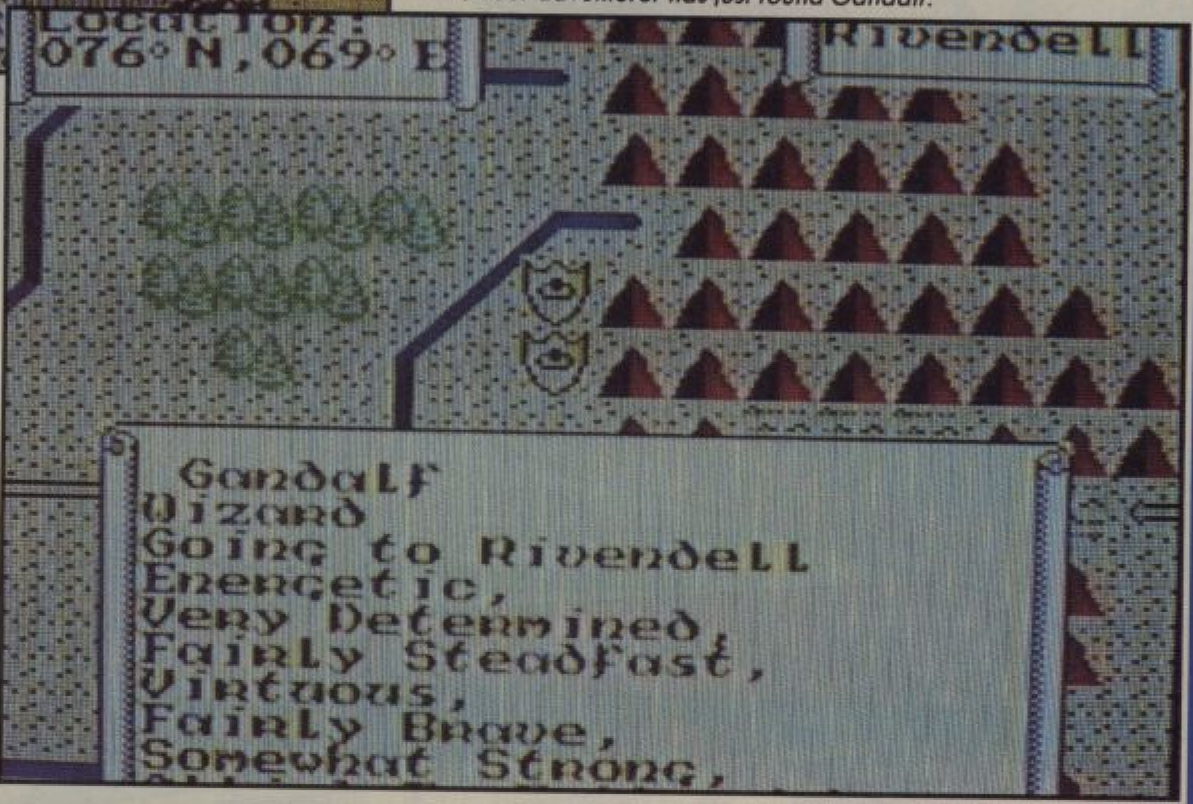
You have to win time to discover the ring and destroy it by flinging it into the Cracks of Doom where it was forged.

In order to win the time to carry out the mission you have to keep the forces of evil at bay. To do this you need to mobilise an army by enlisting the support of the men of Dale, the Nations of the West, the Elves of Lorien and Mirkwood, the Dwarves of Erebor and the Iron Hills.

As a special treat to all Tolkien fans we have a bumper package to give away to the first person to write in and tell us the name of the third book in the Trilogy Lord of the Rings.

The winner will receive a copy of the game and also a copy of the board game – Middle Earth Role Playing System – as featured in AGM News. Send to Tolkien Compo, C+VG, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London,EC1R 3AU.

▼*Your adventurer has just found Gandalf.*



ARTH



The campaign is lost if the forces of evil win back the ring and return it to Barad-Dur or Isenguard.

The graphics and on-screen presentation of War in Middle Earth are superb. All of the icons, the various scrolls, and window information systems are neatly implemented.

The game has all the hallmarks of a game which has been crafted slowly and painstakingly. I can thoroughly recommend this game to Tolkien fans and anyone who enjoys a strategic challenge. Great stuff.

SPEC

- ► GRAPHICS 85%
- ► SOUND 82%
- ► VALUE 86%
- ► PLAYABILITY 89%
- ► **OVERALL 88%**

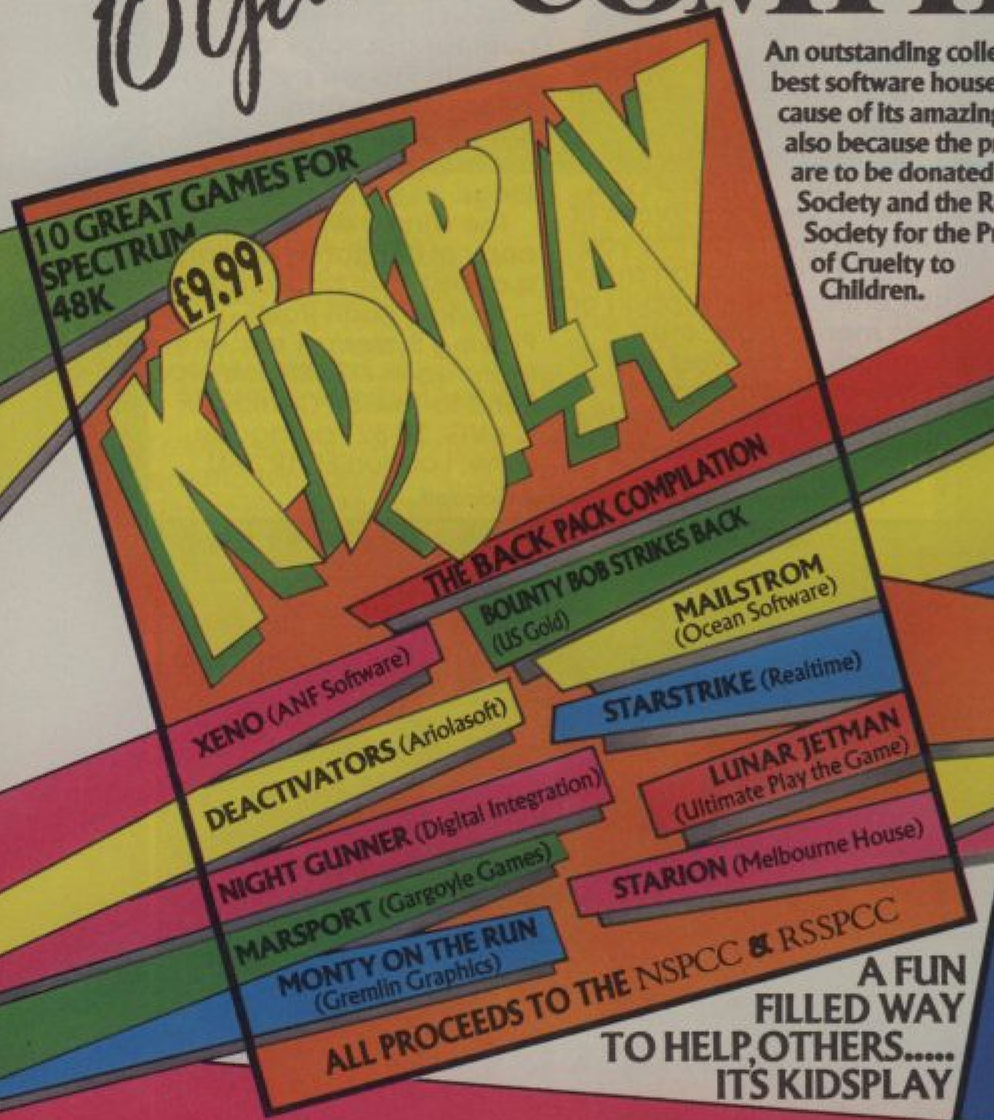
UPDATE . . .

The splendid job carried out with the 8-bit graphics should be bested by the 16-bit versions. All 8-bit versions are on sale now. Amiga, ST and IBM PC and compatible versions will be on sale by the end of the first week in March.

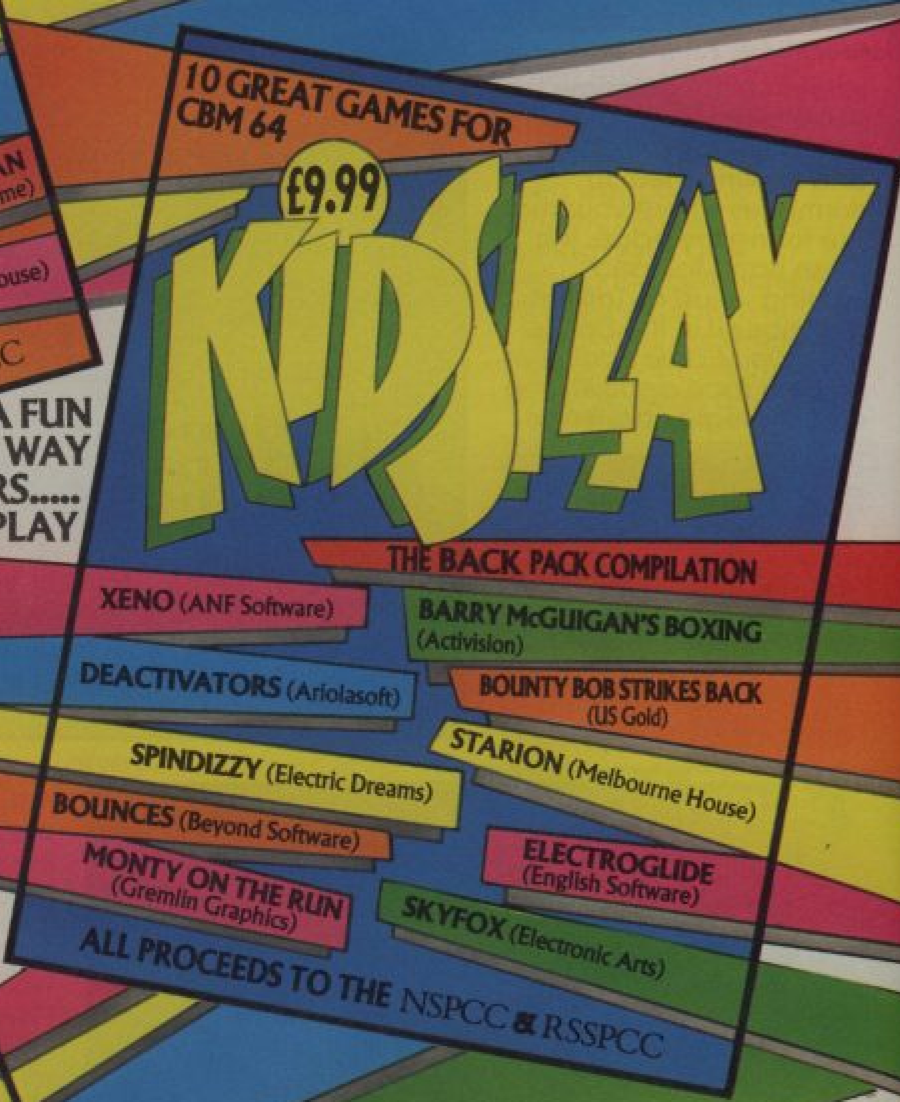
AGM

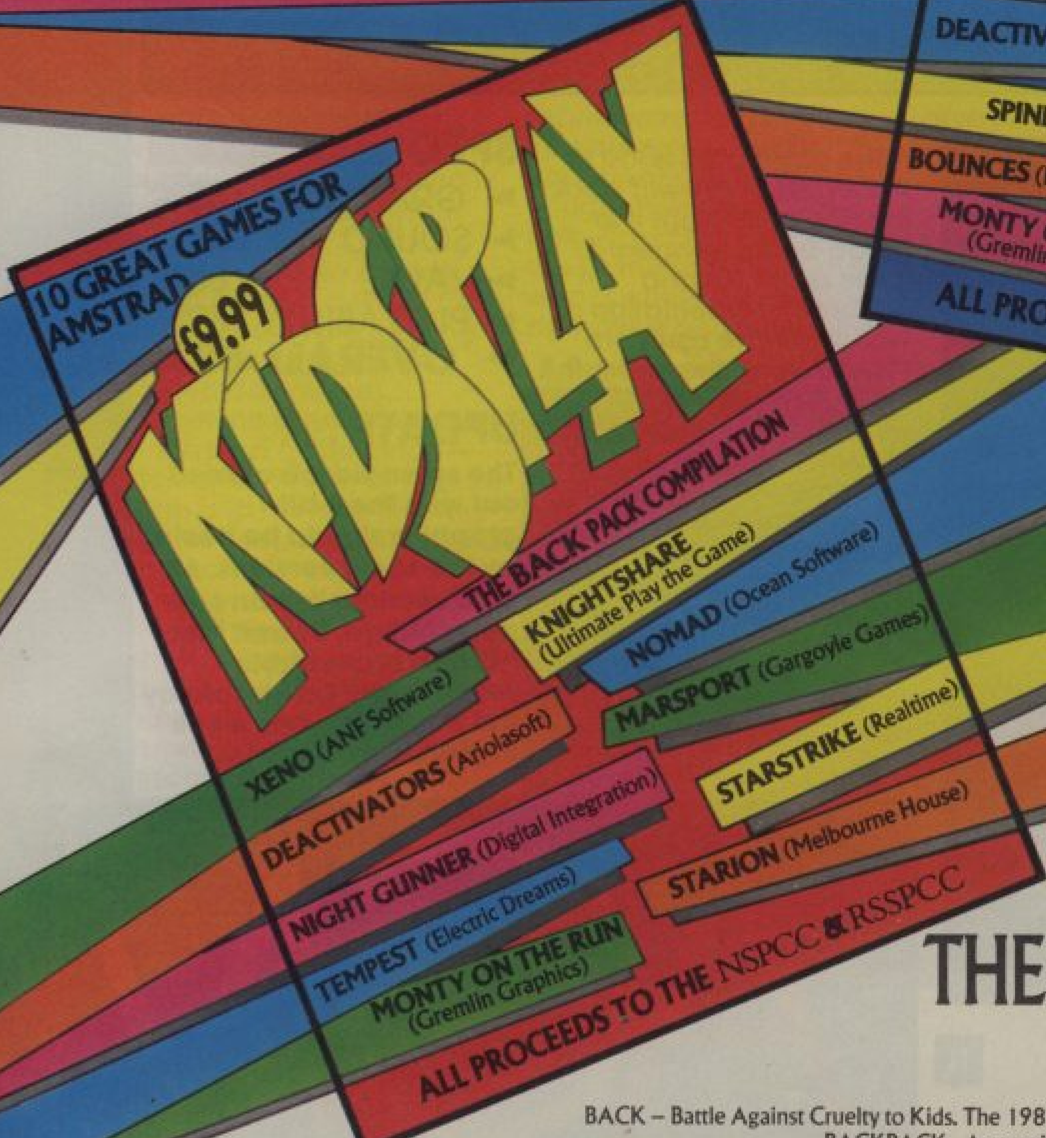
THE ALLTIME GREATEST 10 Game COMPILATIONS

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PlayMasters

Well, here we are again! This month there's a full four pages of POKEs, listings, hints and tips for just about every machine available. Who says you can't please all of the people all of the time? If you've got anything in the way of tips, maps or POKEs, send them in to me at: PLAYMASTERS, C + VG, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU. There's a big bungle of software on offer for the best tips of the month – the winners this month are Sean and Adrian Meads, Ferdose Ahmed and Jamie Brayley. They all win a load of the latest and greatest games for their computers.

Julian Rignall



From next month, Playmasters will be featuring a highscore table. It's called THE PLAYMASTERS, and will feature three separate sections: arcade, computers and consoles. So, if you're a bit of a gamesplaying whizz, send in your scores on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope, and you could see your name up in lights. Don't forget to say which machine your score was achieved on. If your highscore was achieved in an arcade, don't forget to include the initials with which you register your score – JAZ, MJD etc.

Send your mega-scores to: THE PLAYMASTERS HIGHSCORES, C + VG, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU, and become a megastar.

LAST NINJA II

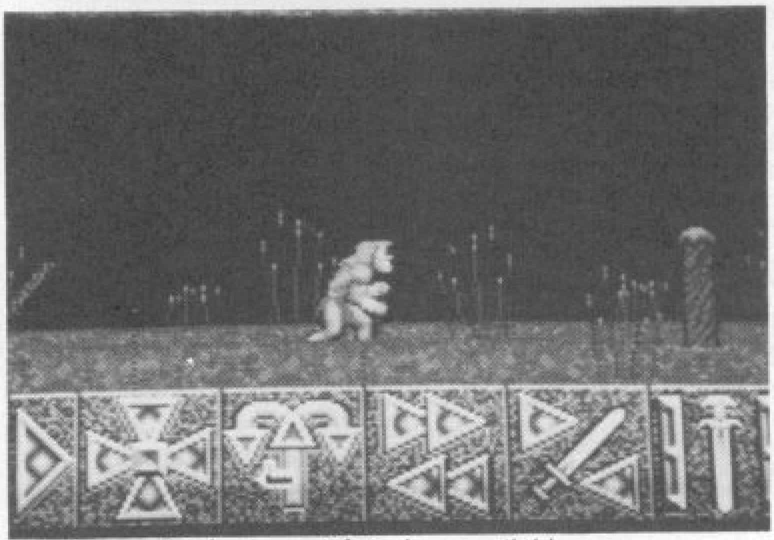
Jamie Brayley has a quick tip for Spectrum players of this brilliant Ninja game. When fighting, hold down the pause (H) key, and your opponent's energy goes down.

BRAINSTORM

Another Jamie Brayley tip, this time for the Spectrum version of last month's C + VG free game. Before you press the fire button select "play game", hold down 1, 2 and 3 to get into the editor mode, or 2 and 4 to access the block puzzle game.

FRANK BRUNO'S BIG BOX

If you're a Spectrum +3 owner with the disk version of this compilation, take heed of Jamie Brayley's advice. Insert the disk and select a game as usual. When it's loading, hold down the break key and select +3 basic. Then put in the relevant POKE before the RANDOMIZE or RUN USR command. Don't forget to put the colon after your POKE.



▲ *Spectrum Barbarian – infinite lives available.*

BATTY
POKE 47633,0:
BOMBJACK
49984,0:
COMMANDO
60692,201:POKE 27654,0:
GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS*
POKE 33352,201:
1942
POKE 52472,0:
SABOTEUR*
POKE 46998,0:POKE 29894,0
SCOOBY DOO*
POKE 29614,0

The POKEs marked with a *also work with a Multiface.

TARGET RENEGADE

When you're loading the Spectrum version of this ace beat 'em up, type LOAD "": REM TARGET RENEGADE, and you'll be awarded with full energy when you tackle a new level. Cheers to Ferdose Ahmed of New Southgate, London for that.

▼ *Last Ninja 2 – enemy energy drain.*



TYPHOON

If you want infinite lives for the Spectrum version of this shoot 'em up, type in this listing from Ferdose Ahmed.

```
10 CLEAR 24575: LOAD
   "" CODE 65024
20 POKE 65039,251:
   POKE 65040,201:
   RANDOMIZE USR
   65024: POKE 65317,91
30 FOR F = 23296 TO
   23305: READ A: POKE
   F,A: NEXT F:
   RANDOMIZE USR
   65280
40 DATA
   175,50,231,152,50,
   135,153,195,0,255
```

BARBARIAN

Here's another infinite lives listing, this time for the Spectrum version of this Psygnosis arcade adventure. Just type it in and RUN it, and don't forget to say thanks to Ferdose Ahmed, who sent it in.

```
10 REM BARBARIAN
   (PSYGNOSIS) POKE
20 REM
30 LOAD "" CODE: POKE
   39830,12: POKE
   39831,250
40 RANDOMIZE USR
   39680: POKE 37480,36
50 FOR F = 64000 TO
   64007: READ A: POKE
   F,A: NEXT F
60 RANDOMIZE USR
   64000
70 DATA 175,50,214,148,
   195,102,237,0
```

R-TYPE

Jerry Hogson from Shortstown, Bedfordshire has found an amusing little bug in the C64 version of this arcade game. When you confront the big alien at the end of level one, and it starts to advance towards the R-9, just beam up and keep your finger on the fire button and you can go right through it. It reappears again, and you can have another crack at destroying it.

AFTERBURNER

ST players of this grotty conversion can access a level select by pausing the game and typing AGES. The game restarts, and you can skip levels using the less than and greater than keys. Cheers to Darren Short of Petts Wood, Kent, for that little tiplet.

OUTRUN

Sega players are advised to keep on taking right turns for the fastest times. At least, that's what Jason Duncan from Peterhead, Aberdeenshire says.

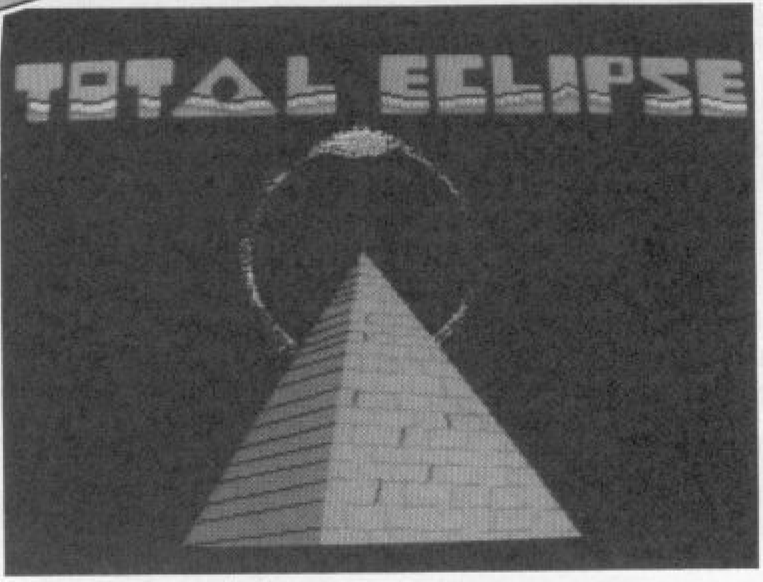
AFTERBURNER

Jason Duncan has another Sega tip. When you're confronted with the flying fortress after stage six, guide your plane to the top left of the screen, and you're transported to level seven. Later confrontations can also be dodged in the same way.

TOTAL ECLIPSE

Daryl Baker of Minehead, Somerset, is a bit of a whizz on this game – in fact he's solved it completely. And he's decided to share his tips with you lot. So if you're stuck in the pyramid, read on and your predicament will be solved.

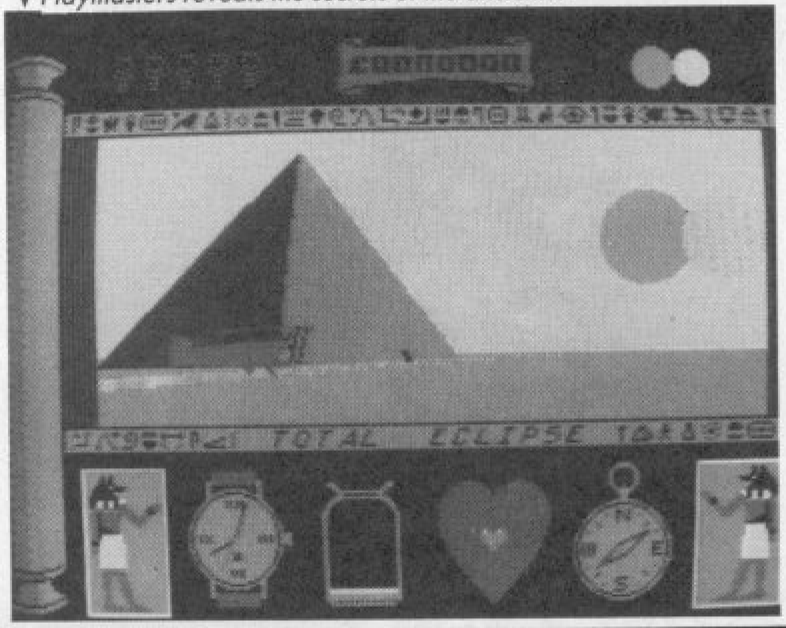
Get onto the aeroplane wing and collect the ANKH. Go round to the back of the pyramid and enter the door. Shoot the block which is across the doorway. Face north and exit the pyramid. Go round to the front of the pyramid and enter. Collect ANKH and exit via the north door. Shoot the block that's next to the diamond. This makes steps appear from the door on the east wall. Go up the stairs and go through door. Shoot the Mummy's head to stop it firing. Go north. Shoot arrow. Go down steps. Shoot the bar that's across the floor a couple of times. Walk up to the wall, face north and walk into the block. This reveals a door leading to ILLUSION. Enter this door.



▲ *Total Eclipse solved!*

Go N, E, S, N, N and go up the steps into SAHARA A. Behind the block which you emerged from is a symbol on the ground. Shoot this object. Enter the door and go west through the exit. This takes you to ILLUSION D. Go through the door at the top of the stairs. Go south through the door. Go west through the door. Shoot the slab that's blocking the stairs, go up the stairs and through the door. Go east. Go downstairs, pick up ANKH, go back up the stairs and go through. Face north and go through the centre door. Go north. Face west and go through door. Shoot eye and exit through east door. Go south. Go south. Go through left door on north wall. Go downstairs and go up west stairs and through the door. Go upstairs and through slim door. Shoot rope that holds ANKH symbol and collect it. Go south. Go downstairs and go through door which is under the stairs. Go across walkway and through door. Go through the door which is at the top of the stairs. Face east and shoot the top door; this produces stairs. Go up these and through the door, and again south through door. Fall through hole in floor. Go north. Go north through slim door. Face west and shoot wall. Collect ANKH. Go north through door. Go east. Collect ANKH from understairs. Go west. Go south four times. Go through left door on north wall. Go down stairs and through west door. Collect ANKH symbol. Go through slim door at top of stairs. Go south. Go through door under stairs. Go across walkway and through the door. Go west through door. Go forward and fall off platform, then go through north door. Go through fourth door. Go through second door (not the one you just came out of). Walk down the steps to the floor and push the block to fill the gap. Go south. Shoot blocks and exit east. Go north twice and go to the front of the pyramid and enter it. Go north, west and through slim door. Go south. Go through door understairs. Go across walkway and through door. Go west. Go forward and fall off platform, then go through north door. Go through fourth door, then through second door (not the one you came out of). Walk to other side. Shoot head and go back through the middle door. Go south three times. Shoot walkway so that you can walk onto it. Move to the middle, face downwards and fire. Now walk towards the other door and go through. Shoot block. Go west. Shoot walkway so that you can go into it. Move to the middle. Face downwards and fire. Now walk towards the other door and go through. Walk into the block on the wall and eventually you'll be transported. Go through slim door. Go upstairs and through door. Face east. Shoot top door and walk up the stairs before they disappear. Go through the door. Go east, south and climb stairs and go through door. (SAVE GAME).

▼ *Playmasters reveals the secrets of the ancients.*



Walk upstairs until you can go no further. Duck down and go forwards once only. Press H once and the passage opens up. Press H again to go to the shrine. Make sure that you can't be shot by the gun which is on the ceiling. This involves moving close to the STATUE. Now start firing at it for a long time and you'll complete the game. Hoorah!

ELITE

This Amiga cheat was discovered by a number of

people, but Richard Panman of East Horsley, Surrey was the first to send it in. When you're asked for a word from the space trader's manual, type in SARA. When prompted again, type the correct word. Press any key to get the "Load New Commander (Y/N)" and type N. When the status screen appears, press the *key on the numeric keypad, and this presents you with a load of code in hexadecimal and the prompt "change byte number?" Type in the codes and values below to get the things you want.

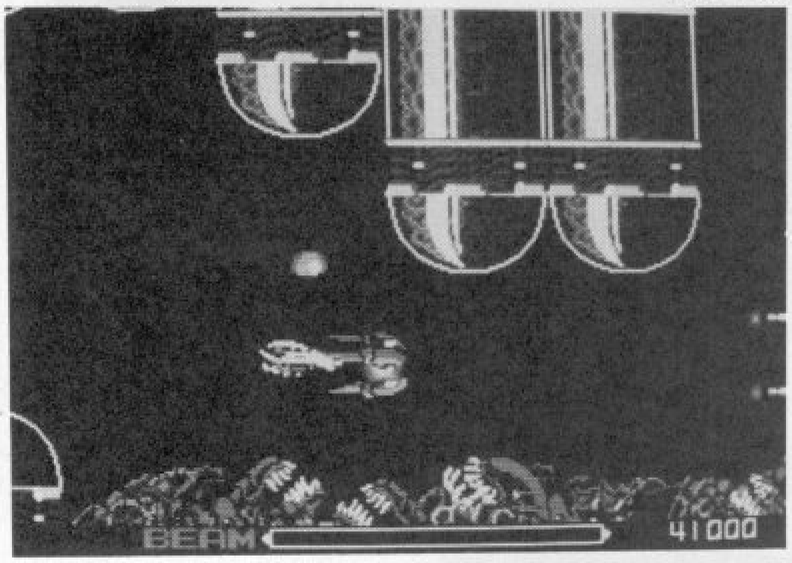
BYTE	VALUE	EFFECT
22	01	Large Cargo Bay
24	01	ECM System
2A	01	Fuel Scoops
2C	01	Escape Capsule
30	01	Energy Unit
32	01	Docking computer
34	01	Galactic Hyerpdrive
3A	01	Retro Rocket
3C	01	ECM Jammer
3E	01	Cloaking Device
90	01	Legal Status Fugitive
91	01	Legal Status Offender
97	01-08	Harmless to ELITE
80	01	16t Alien Items
84	01	16t Medical Supplies
88	01	Unhappy Refugees
8C	01	Thargoid Document
2E	01	Energy Bomb
27	0F	Pulse Lasers all sides*
39	FF	Military Lasers all sides**
21	01-04	Missiles (0-4)

***IF 39 = 00**
****IF 27 = 00**

For loads of money (1677721.6 Cr) use

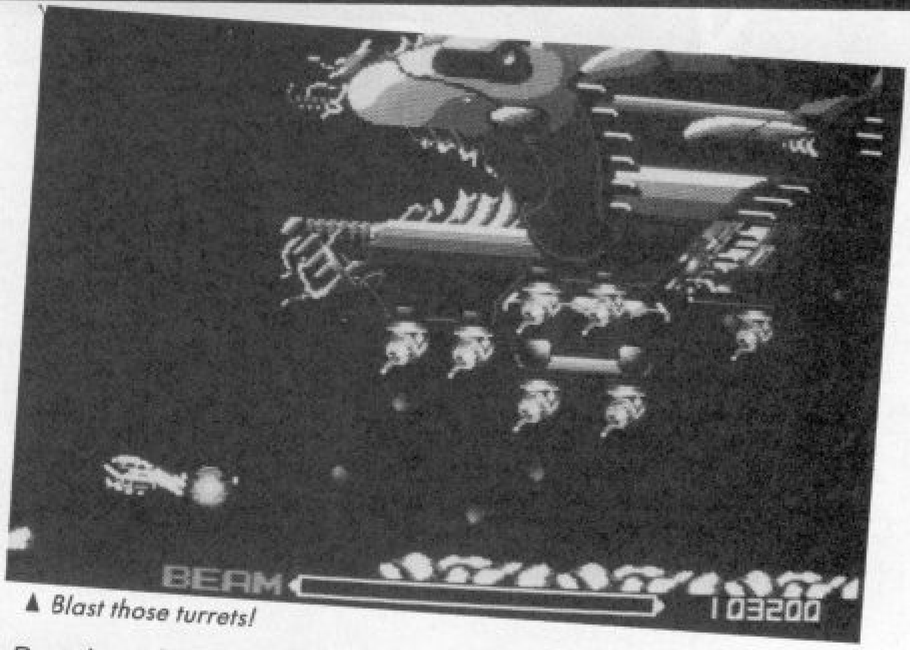
19	**FF**
1A	**FF**
1B	**FF**

▼ *R-Type now snake-free.*



R-TYPE

This is a bit of a weird tip, sent in by Philip Hogg of Maghull, Merseyside. He's obviously a compulsive disk-swapper, because the tip he's got is for ST owners with R-Type and Afterburner. Play the game up to level two. When you've lost your lives, don't take another credit, and let it reload the title screen. Take out R-Type disk B and insert a disk B of Afterburner. Press fire to start. After a while level two appears, but with the difficulty of level one. At the end, the heart doesn't have the snake, so you can blow it up with ease. Now insert R-Type disk B again and you'll start level two again with loads of weapons and a highscore. Hmmm.


▲ *Blast those turrets!*

GAUNTLET II

Matt Hall, who lives in Ripley, Derbyshire has found a neat way of getting through the really tough screens. Pause the game for three minutes and then press fire and all the walls become exits. This happens while you're playing – but if you use pause you don't lose any energy!

OPERATION WOLF

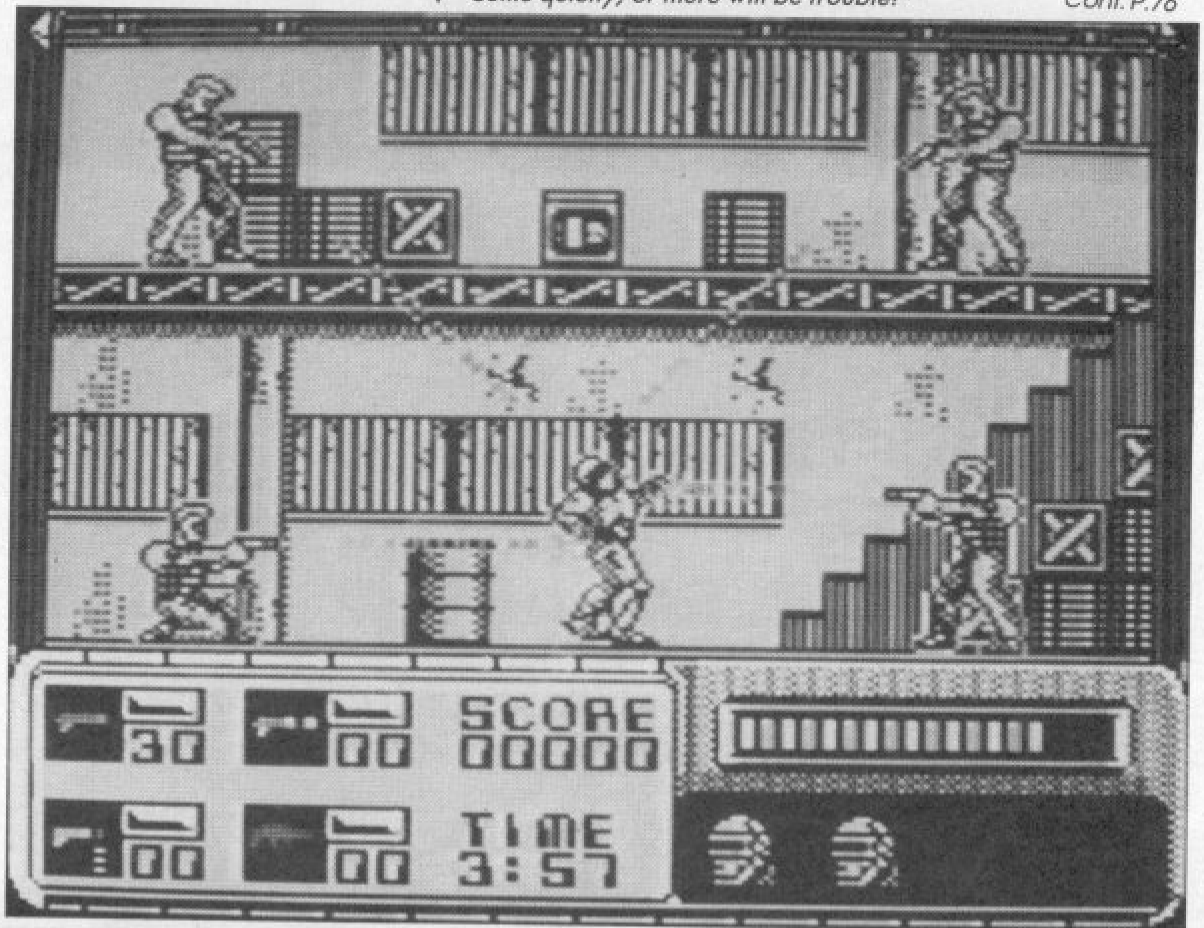
Kingsley Hyam reckons that if you load the 128k Spectrum version into 48k mode, the program starts on level six.

ROBOCOP

Calling all C64 owners! Sean and Adrian Means from East Oakley, Hants, have an utterly fab series of listings for this Ocean tie-in. First up is a reset POKE for disk owners, but unfortunately they only work on the first level. Load the game, reset the machine and type POKE 35028, 173 (to speed up the game), POKE 33034, 173 for no enemies, POKE 44179, 96 for infinite time

Cont. P.76

▼ *"Come quietly, or there will be trouble!"*

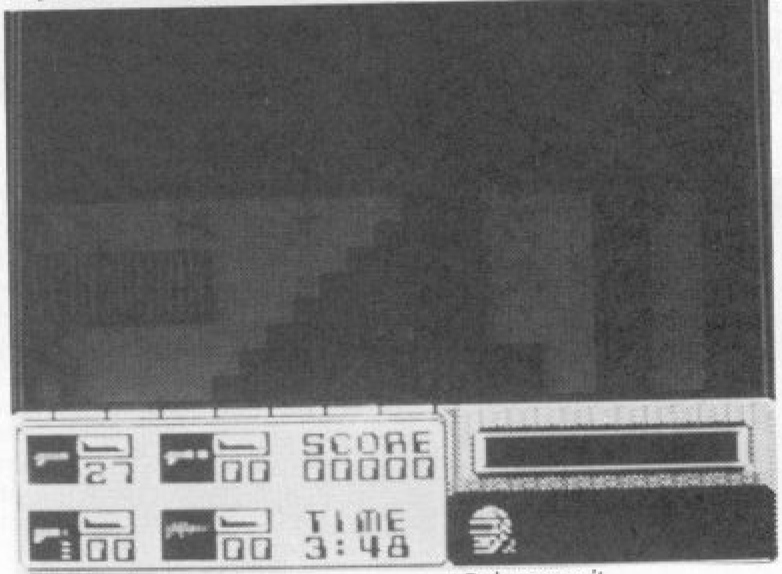


and POKE 44392, 96 for infinite lives.

Then enter SYS 32768 to restart. If you're a cassette owner, type in the following listing, bung the tape into the deck, RUN the program and press play on tape.

```
0  REM **** SEAN + ADE
   ROBOCOP POKES ****
1  POKE53280,
   0:POKE53281
   ,0:PRINTCHR$ (147);
   "SEAN AND ADRIAN
   PRESENT -
   ROBOPOKES (DOWN)
   (DOWN)"
2  FORI = 11TOOSTEP-1:
   PRINTTAB (I); "SEAN
   AND ADRIAN IN 1989 . . .
   (UP)":NEXT:PRINT:
   PRINT
3  FORI = OTO5:PRINTTA-
   B
   (I); "A FORCE TO BE
   RECKONED WITH . . .
   (UP)":NEXT: PRINT
10 FORI = 352TO468:REA-
   DA:
   POKEI,
   A:C = C + A:NEXT
15 IF C    16583 THEN
   PRINT "ERROR IN
   DATA!!!":END
18 SYS368
20 DATA
   72,169,131,141,89,1,169,
   1,141,90,1,104,173,
   32,208
30 DATA
   96,32,86,245,169,1,
   141,86,3,169,96,141,85,
   3,169,32,141,84,3,96
40 DATA
   169,96,141,104,173,141,
   147,172,169,
   96,141,233,246,141,
   238,246
50 DATA
   169,36,141,235,246,169,
   110,141,240,
   246,162,176,142,
   241,246,232
60 DATA
   142,236,246,169,179,
   141,243,246,169,1,
   141,244,246,76,0,128,
   169,96
70 DATA
   141,159,185,141,164,
   185,169,164,
   141,161,185,169,
   168,141,162,185
80 DATA
   169,221,141,166,185,
   169,167,141,167,185,
   76,0,128,83,43,65
```

If you want a good laugh, get to level three, reset the machine and enter and RUN the following listing – it's a R-r-robocop r-rapper!



▲*Robo-cops it.*

```
0  REM * ROBO-RAP
   SPEECH LEVEL 3*
1  REM * BY SEAN/ADE
   MEADS IN 1989! *
3  REM LOOK OUT FOR
   OUR SAMPLE MUSIC
   MAKER/PLAYER -
   SOON TO BE
   RELEASED!!
5  FORI = 49152T049216:-
   READA:
   POKEI,A:NEXTI
6  POKE53265,
   0:SYS49152
10 DATA
   120,169,53,133,1,160,5,-
   32
20 DATA
   97,236,32,123,236,169,
   245,141
30 DATA
   113,236,206,124,236,
   136,208,239
40 DATA 169,245,141,103,
   236,169,254,141
50 DATA
   113,236,32,97,236,
   32,123,236
60 DATA 238,124,236,200,
   192,9,208,242
70 DATA 169,236,141,103,
   236,169,6,141
80 DATA
   124,236,76,0,192,83,69,
   65,78,45,65,68,69,0
```

▼ *Invincible Robocop ready for action.*



BRAINSTORM

C64 owners of C + VG's free game can use this Sean and Adrian Meads POKE to get unlimited lives. Just load the game, reset the computer and type POKE 18281, 173 and then SYS 16384 to restart.

520ST-FM SUPER PACK



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ATARI ST

ST COMPUTERS

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The MEGA ST computers are styled as as lightweight keyboard with a separate CPU, connected by a coiled telephone style cable. There are two versions of the MEGA ST, one with 2Mbytes of RAM and the other with 4Mbytes. Each version has a 1Mbyte double sided disk drive built-in to the CPU unit. The MEGA ST's do not come with modulator built-in and must therefore be used with a monitor. With every MEGA ST purchased, we will add the 'Professional Pack' software (worth £384.83) detailed above, plus the Silica ST Starter Kit (worth over £200) both Free Of Charge. Return the coupon for further details.

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ARCADE



▲ *Jump the bridge at 60mph.*

This month Clare Edgely and Julian Rignall visit the Amusement and Trade

HARD DRIVIN

Based on a Chevrolet Corvette with the graphics of a Ferrari Testerossa, Atari's latest blockbuster *Hard Drivin'* takes racing sims into a new dimension.

And that's because *Hard Drivin'* is the closest you're ever going to get to a true driving simulator in the arcades. In fact, it was originally designed to be a driving school simulator until someone woke up to the fact that it would make lots more cash as a coin-op.

Designed around a revolutionary new cabinet, with an adjustable sliding seat which swings out sideways, marvellous graphics and a proper manual gear stick, *Hard Drivin'* really tests your prowess on the roads.

And it's far from boring. As soon as the decision to stick the game into the arcades was made, a stunt track was added. So now you can go bananas at the wheel and still remain in one piece. Loop the loop, speed up ramps to jump draw bridges and hurtle round roller coaster tracks. Before each stunt, stay within the suggested speed setting or you're likely to come unstuck in mid-air. Even more fun, if you do get it wrong an action replay immediately follows.

I could go on extolling the features of this incredible piece of programming – it's more than just a game. As well as manual gear there is an auto option, as well as the stunt track there is the more usual race round a conventional course. Sound, graphics and feel are all there. And what's more the whole thing is started with an ignition key!

So turn that key, get into gear and take *Hard Drivin'* for a test run.

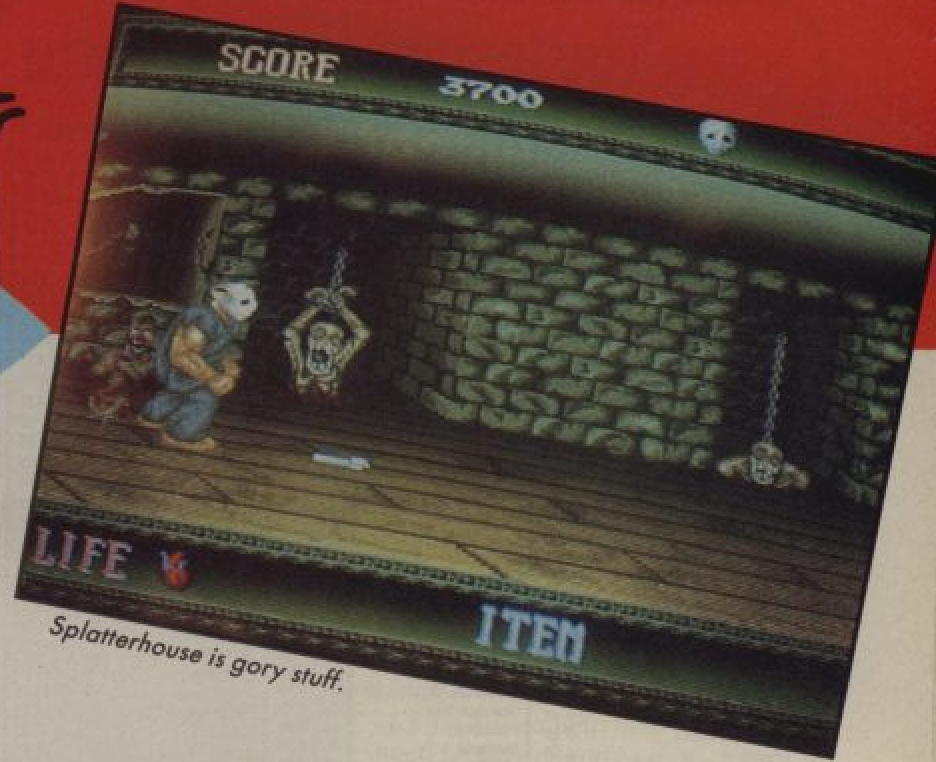
▼ *The Hard Drivin' course map.*



▼ *The loop on the stunt track.*



E ACTION



Splatterhouse is gory stuff.

Exhibition in Olympia to bring you news of the latest releases on the arcade scene.



SPLATTERHOUSE

Playing Namco's *Splatterhouse* is like walking into the little shop of horrors.

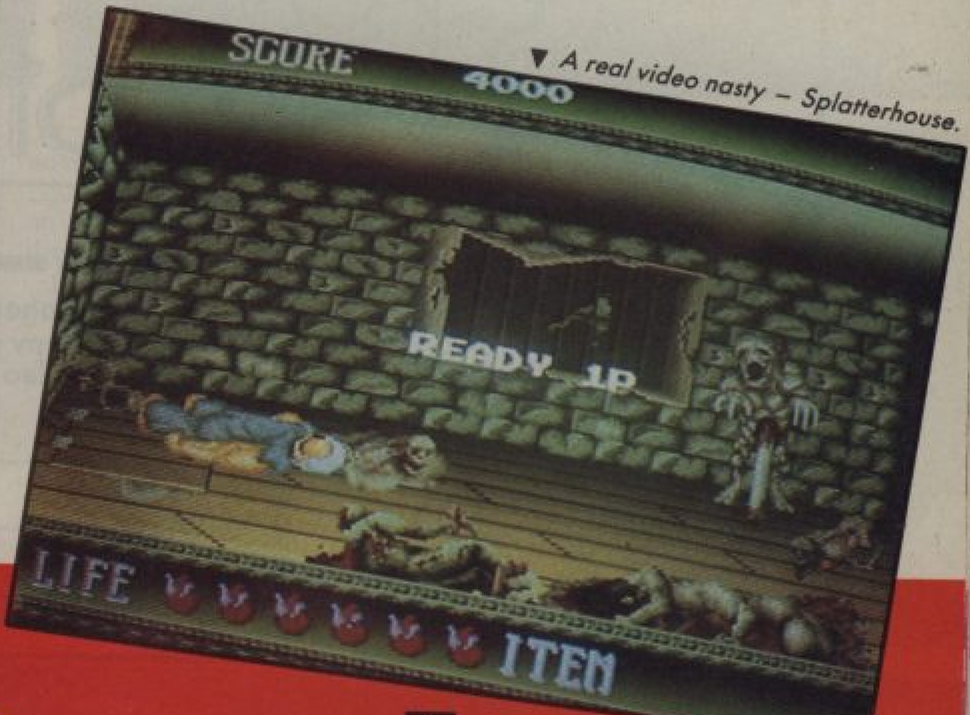
It's a bash'em up of sorts with you, the masked hero, up against hordes of zombies and slimy remains from bygone days. Armed with a meat cleaver you stalk dank corridors, persued by hosts of the undead. Punch or slash at them and you'll be sprayed with revolting green gunge as they fall to the ground.

Skeletons drop from the roof dangling by chains, pools of slippery gloop slither to the floor, and deadly spikes impale you. As you will gather, there's nothing subtle or nice about *Splatterhouse.*

Killing your deadly foe is fairly simple. A well-timed kick does the trick, or a swipe with the meat cleaver is just as effective. However, the going gets harder in the second scene where you're locked in a room with masses of sharp-toothed snake-like creatures which fly out of their nests to fasten their jaws on your legs and arms. Though it's quite horrible, the action is fast and your only hope is to punch and kick your way out of trouble.

Splatterhouse is going to appeal to horror addicts. If coin-ops could give out smells this one would reek of an abbatoir.

▼ *A real video nasty – Splatterhouse.*



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ARCADE ACTION

IKARI III

Another SNK follow on to greet the fans of punch 'em ups is Ikari III, based on two macho heroes fighting for their lives.

Punching and kicking is the only means of attack until you can pick up some dropped weaponry. While still paddling across the river the enemy swim up behind and attack with knives. Punch back and you soon make it to dry land.

Then the punches really start to fly with the enemy diving at you from all directions. Use the swivel joystick to turn your character round to meet each attack and the fire buttons to retaliate.

It's hard going but you'll soon make it to the end of scene mechanical monster which will be the likes of a massive tank or helicopter. Punching and kicking are no help here – you need firepower and as if on cue, a baddie runs onto screen carrying one. Just kill him, pick it up and away you go.

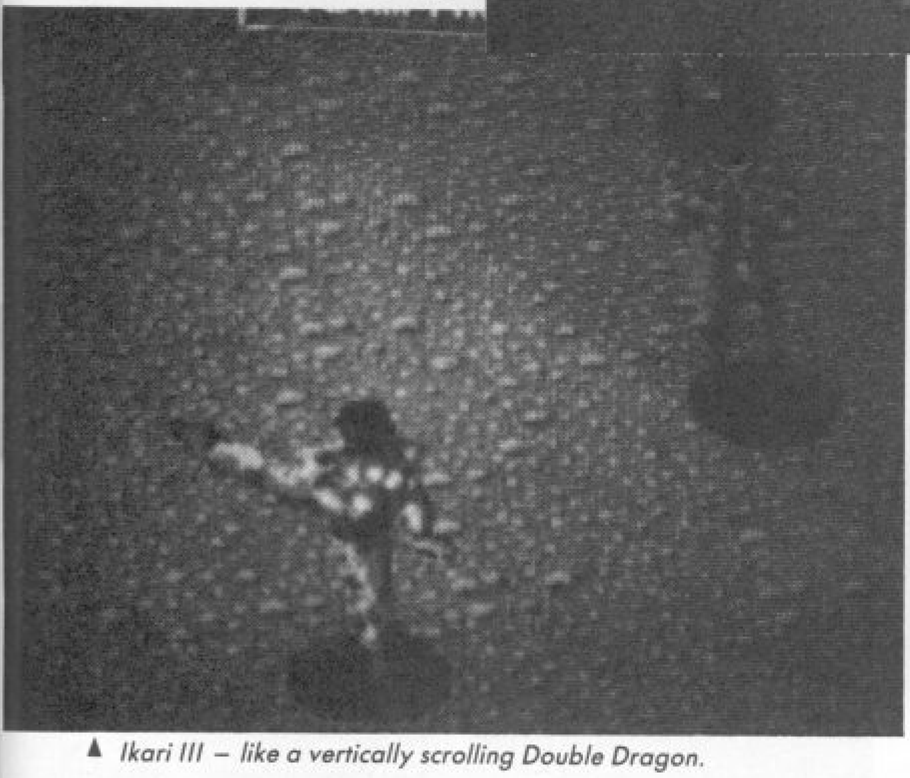
Nothing particularly new, but *Ikari III* features nice large graphics and good sound effects, and is the type of game which seems to be constantly in vogue.



Ikari Warriors III. ►

▼ *Massed mayhem at the end of a stage.*





▲ *Ikari III – like a vertically scrolling Double Dragon.*

METAL HAWK

Fancy yourself as a chopper pilot? Well try out Namco's *Metal Hawk* for size. More my cup of tea than *Splatterhouse.*

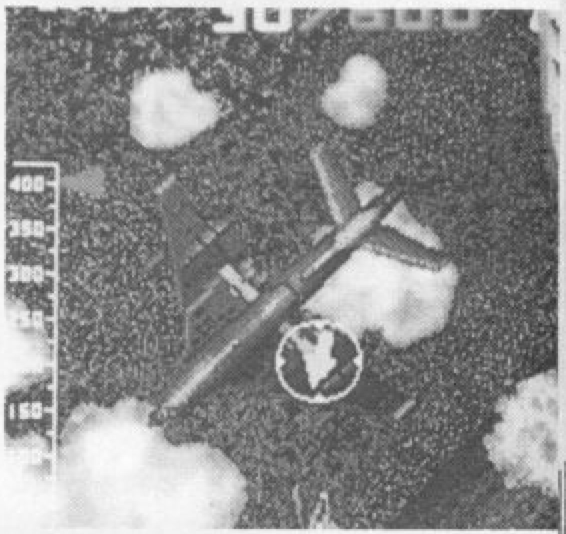
Metal Hawk comes in two sizes – a huge climb-in, all-dancin' cabinet which takes you for a breath-taking ride, or a more sedate upright version. In fact, I found the sit-in version, which really throws you around harder to play though a lot more fun. No score to speak of, but a really wild ride.

Now to the game. You are, of course, on a lone mission: one chopper against enemy tanks, squadrons of aircraft and battleships. Get the picture? Now comes the different bit. Controls are by joystick and altitude adjuster.

Follow the arrow at the nose of your copter. This directs you to the next enemy position. At the same time up or down instructions are given to swoop to ground level or hurl your craft back into the skies, depending on where the next attack is coming from. Equipped with air-to-air or air-to-ground missiles you can then let rip.

Lots of excitement and a thrilling ride are guaranteed if you're man enough to ride the *Metal Hawk.*

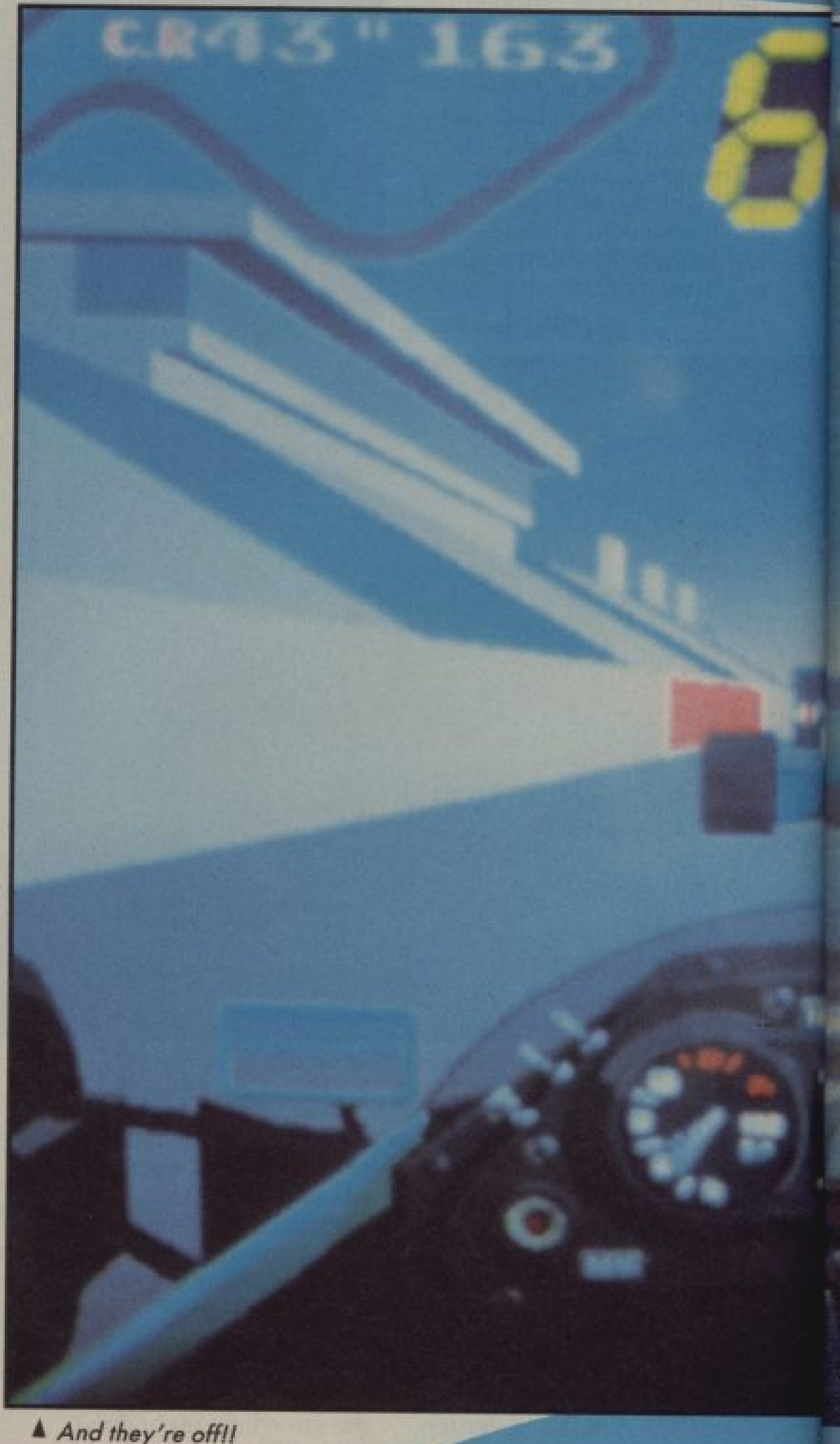
Metal Hawk is a fast blast. ►





▲ *The race begins.*

ARCADE



▲ *And they're off!!*

WINNING RUN

The second racing game previewed at the ATEI show was Namco's *Winning Run,* which uses similar filled 3D technology to Atari's *Hard Drivin'.*

The game places the player in the driving seat of a formula one car, with the choice of either three or five gears. The latter is a far more powerful car, but the ability of the other drivers on the course is increased.

First of all you have to drive a qualifying lap, and the better you do the better your grid position in the actual Grand Prix. Failure to qualify for the race results in a premature end to your racing.

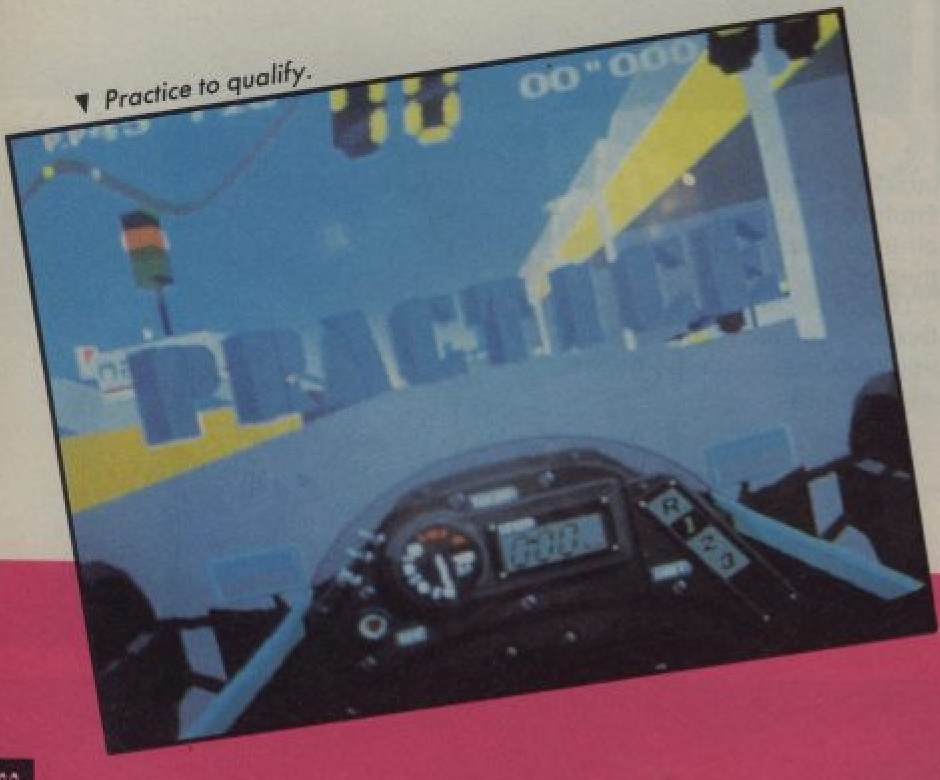
The Grand Prix itself is driven against twelve other drivers, who race extremely well – if you drive badly you'll find them overtaking your car! This makes the game even more thrilling as you race around neck-and-neck with other drivers, rather than simply overtake them like you do in *Out Run* and *Final Lap.*

The graphics are simply stunning, with a Polymiser system used to give the most impressive 3D graphics yet seen. There are tunnels, hills, ancoves – and just about everything you'd expect to find on a real race track.

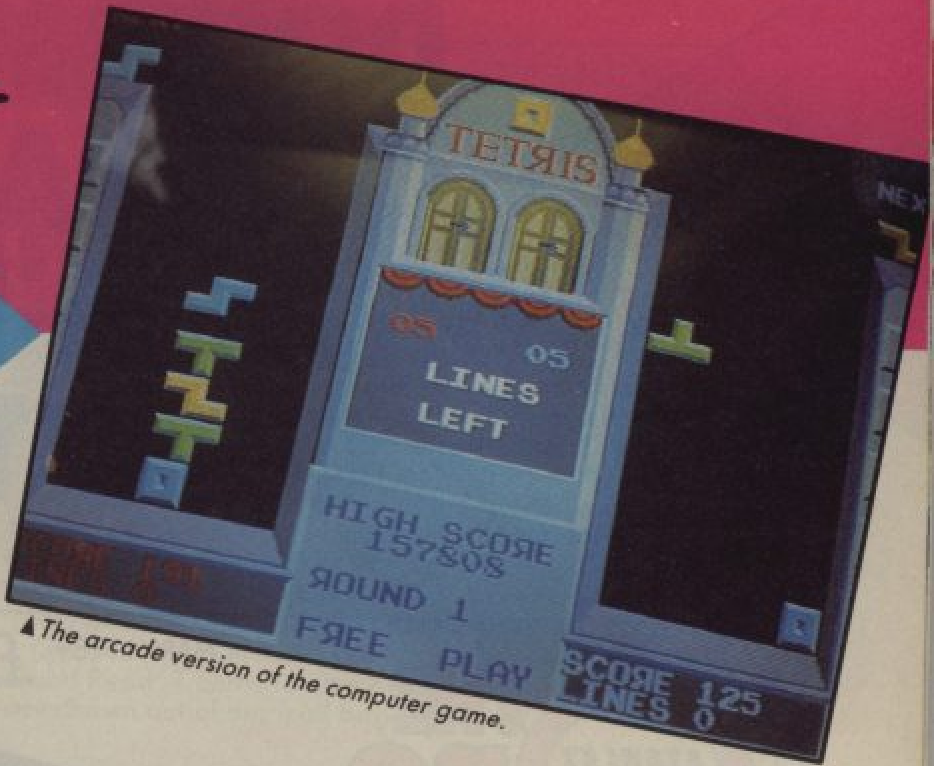
The game "feels" incredible too, with superb handling and feedback as you skid, countersteer and bump on the kerbs.

Winning Run is easily the best racing game yet seen – it's thoroughly realistic and totally exhilarating. Drive it!

▼ *Practice to qualify.*



E ACTION



▲ *The arcade version of the computer game.*



TETRIS

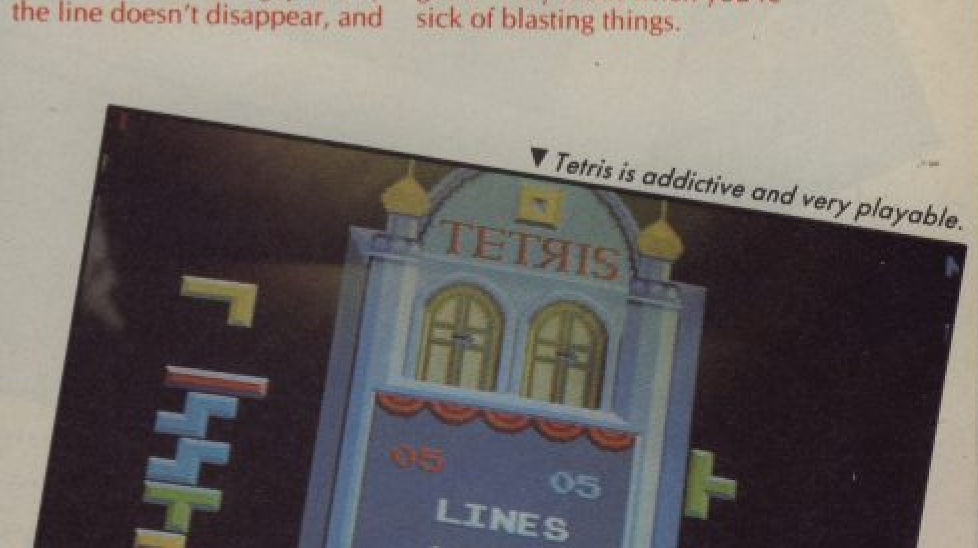
Tetris will be a familiar game to most computer owners – Mirrorsoft released it last year on just about every format available, and now it's made it to the arcades courtesy of Atari.

If you missed out, it's a fiendishly addictive puzzle game that was programmed in Russia by students at Moscow University. The idea is laughably simple – different shaped blocks float down the screen, and you have to guide them to the bottom of the screen and make a solid line. When you do, the entire block drops down one line. This might sound easy, but in practice it's not. Quick thinking is required to rotate the shape and fit it neatly into the other blocks below – if a gap is left, the line doesn't disappear, and as more gaps are left the group of blocks at the bottom of the screen begins to build up. And when it reaches the top the game is over.

When you start you have to clear five lines, whereupon a bonus is awarded. As you progress through the game, more and more lines have to be cleared – and the blocks drop at an increasing speed.

The screen is split vertically into two separate playing fields, and two players can either battle head-to-head, or play independently of one another – something quite unusual in an arcade game.

Tetris is an addictive and enjoyable puzzle game, and makes a very unusual arcade game – try it out when you're sick of blasting things.



▼ *Tetris is addictive and very playable.*

DON'T MISS THE ONE MAGAZINE WHERE 16-BIT GAMES COME TO LIFE



ST + AMIGA DISK SPECIAL

BLASTEROIDS

Read the review, admire the screenshots, play the game.

PLUS

– Another top game demo.

MARCH ISSUE ON SALE FEBRUARY 28TH

Golden

JOYSTICK AWARDS 88

It's that Golden Joystick time of year again. Voting is now open for Europe's most prestigious computer game awards. Golden Joysticks is entering its sixth proud year. In the time we have been running the awards each year has seen a large growth in the number of votes cast by you – the C+VG readers. It's the reader poll that makes our awards the special ones. No arbitrary panels, no reviewers sticking their noses in. The games that win our prizes are the ones you vote for. Plain and simple.

This year we are expanding the awards by inviting our sister magazines in the Emap group (our publishers) to extend the voting to their readers. Voting forms will also be appearing in Sinclair User, Commodore User and The One.

The game categories are as follows: Software House of the Year, Game of the Year, Adventure of the Year, Arcade Game of the Year, Strategy Game of the Year, Role Playing Game of the Year, Programmer of the Year, Best Original Game, Best Coin-op Conversion, Best Graphics (16 bit), Best Graphics (8 bit), Best Soundtrack (16 bit), Best Soundtrack (8 bit), Best Simulation.

In addition there are four machine specific awards sponsored by individual magaiznes. These are the C+VG Console Game of the Year, the Commodore User Amiga Game of the Year, the Sinclair User Spectrum Game of the Year, and The One Atari ST Game of the Year.

Get your votes in now. We have ten C+VG 'Stonking Good Read' T Shirts to give away to ten lucky voters who are drawn out of our mail bag. Vote now.

Best Coin-op Conversion..

Runner-Up..

Software House of the Year..

Runner-Up..

Arcade Game of the Year..

Runner-Up..

Best Adventure Game..

Runner-Up..

Best Original Game..

Runner-Up..

Best Graphics (8-bit)..

Runner-Up..

Best Graphics (16-bit)..

Runner-Up..

Best Soundtrack (8-bit)..

Runner-Up..

Best Soundtrack (16-bit)..

Runner-Up..

Programmer of the Year..

Runner-Up..

Best Role Playing Game..

Runner-Up..

Strategy Game of the Year..

Runner-Up..

Best Simulation..

Runner-Up..

Game of the Year..

Runner-Up..

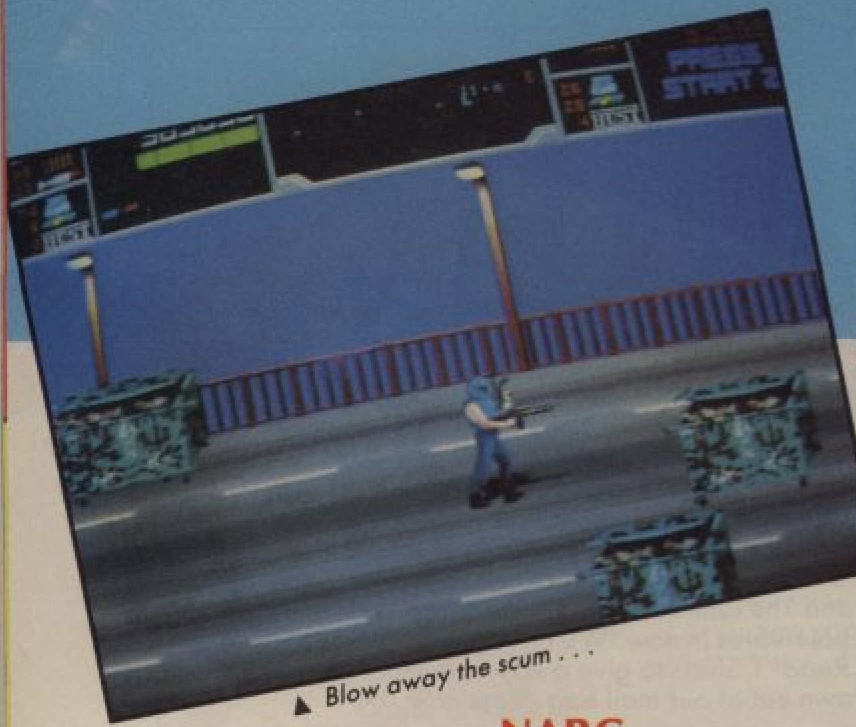
Best Console Game..

Runner-Up..

Send your forms to: Golden Joysticks 1988, C + VG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3AU.

Voting Coupon

ARCADE



▲ *Blow away the scum . . .*

NARC

K.R.A.K. down on drugs. Narcotics, dope addicts and thugs make up the opposition in *Narc* as you lay about with a machine gun in a classic shoot 'em up with a real message – Say no to drugs.

K.R.A.K. is an illegal drug concoction causing widescale problems in America. In this game you play one of two Narcotics officers who have to stamp out pushers, punks and junkies and then gun for Mr Big, the all-powerful drugs baron.

Pushers are the most common criminal, and they slink around in drab raincoats. They're quickly identified and just as quickly dead. Rolls of greenbacks are dropped and white packets of the deadly dust litter the street. Pick these up for bonus points. Rockets and extra ammo also come your way in the same fashion.

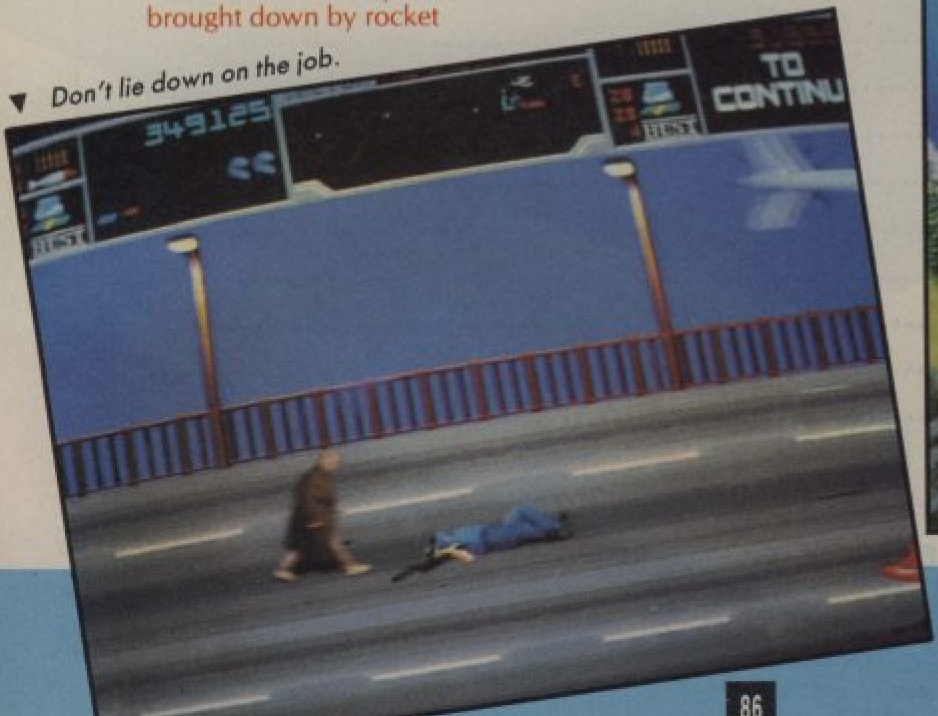
Just one problem, the pushers put up a fight and will gang up on you. They've also got an armed chopper flying over which can only be brought down by rocket launcher.

Your mission takes you all over the city, from dingy streets to warehouses, underground to vicious haunts and over bridges. At all times the pressure is on to collect the evidence and rid the streets of garbage. If you have the chance, bust the pushers rather than filling them full of lead. You get extra points in the 'evidence' screen where the money and packets of dope collected are counted.

Mad knifemen spring to attack. Junkies join the fray and killer dogs are set loose. Let one of these four-legged monsters near you and they'll tear you to bits. Shoot them and they turn into puppies and run away! That's one soft-hearted programmer out there!

It's action all the way downtown in Narc. What with dodging lead and garbage bins, and screeching around in sports cars and specially equipped choppers, there's never a dull moment.

▼ *Don't lie down on the job.*



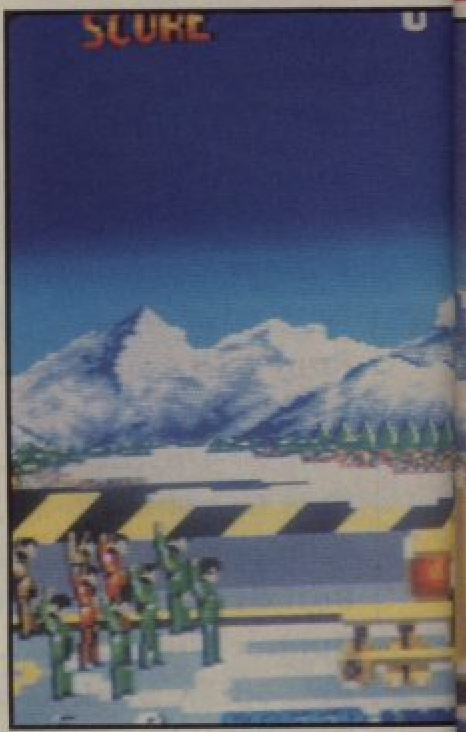
APACHE 3

Attack! Attack! The word is out and you're soon airborne in Tatsumi's *Apache 3* – the latest in attack helicopters.

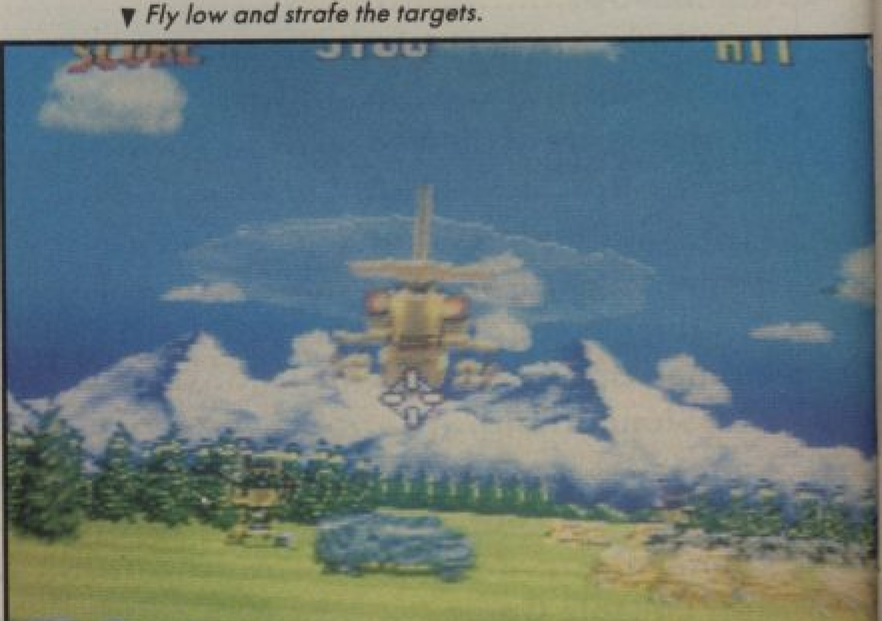
Looking very similar to *Thunderblade,* with same style graphics and attack sequences, you must guide your whirlybird down tunnels, blasting tanks and oncoming fighter aircraft.

Explosions fill your gun sights as you rocket over enemy terrain. Soon you're out of the tunnel and flying in the open over desert terrain. Now you're a sitting target. Fast reactions are called for to dodge enemy fire and, at the same time, line up your sights on the next target.

Equipped with missiles and rockets and a turbo boost for the chopper, increase your



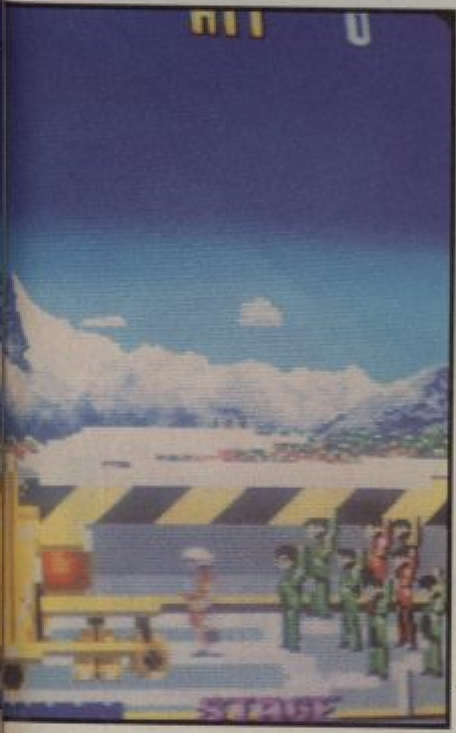
▼ *Fly low and strafe the targets.*



ACTION



▲ *The first mission details.*

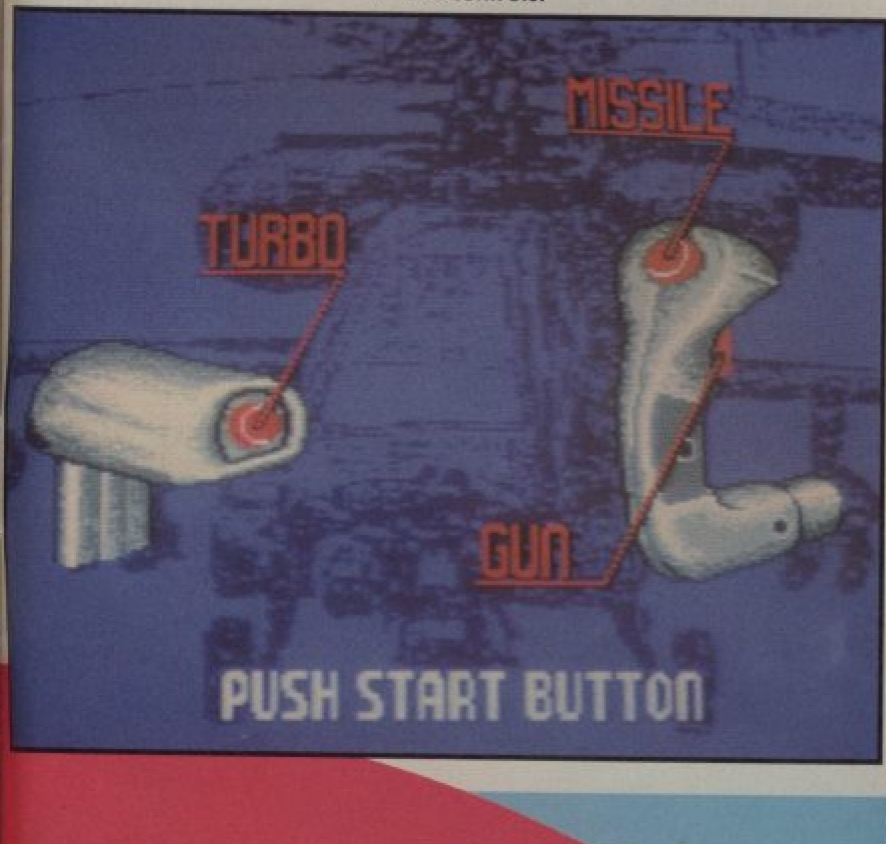

◄ *Apache 3 prepares for take-off.*

power rating by blasting crates out of the skies. These descend on parachutes and getting to them while trying to dodge the enemy can be pretty hairy.

There are several major targets to destroy, and they offer plenty of resistance as you hover and attempt to take them out. When you've destroyed the target, it's on to the next mission, where even tougher enemy forces await.

Apache 3 is very playable and a lot more controllable than *Thunderblade*. With its borrowed theme it's nothing spectacularly new, but is still worth a blast for the sheer hell of it.

▼ *The controls.*



OPERATION THUNDERBOLT

Following the huge success of *Operation Wolf*, there was only one thing Taito could do – Capitalise on this winning combination and bring out *Operation Thunderbolt*.

This is *Op Wolf II*, and the main addition to the original is a number of scenes where you travel into the screen. The game starts off in much the same way. Enemy agents leap out from behind objects and try and pump you full of holes. The closer they get the larger the characters, and when you're almost eyeball to eyeball it's difficult bringing your gunsight to bear before they've shot you in the guts.

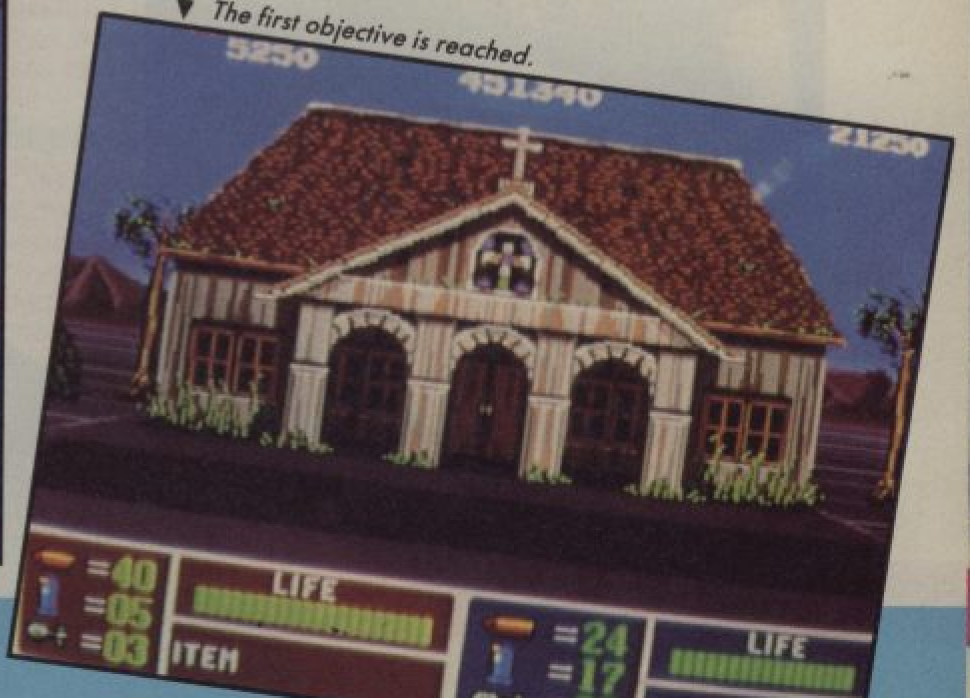
Knives and grenades are thrown. Blast these before they reach their target – you. Shoot rockets and magazines of bullets which appear at random and they'll add to your fast diminishing store.

Later you find yourself on a dirt track shooting down attacking choppers, planes and enemy tanks. Trucks whizz past you from behind and planes hurtle towards you – a nice touch. Your mission in this case is to force down a hijacked passenger plane. Enter the plane and rows of empty seats greet your eyes.

All hell breaks out as hostages stumble towards you and the hijackers let rip. Try not to shoot the passengers. Just kill the baddies. Eventually you'll make it to the flight deck where the captain is being held with a gun to his head . . . at which point I ran out of bullets.

Two machine guns, instead of the one found on *Op Wolf* cabinets are featured and judging by the success of its predecessor in the arcades I expect *Op Thunderbolt* will make a killing.

▼ *The first objective is reached.*



Mean Machines

Under the watchful eye of Julian Rignall, the Mean Machines column continues to get bigger and better. No less than six Sega games are reviewed, including R-Type, Rastan and Rampage, there's exclusive news of forthcoming Sega titles, and John Minson checks out the new Konix Multi-System console and gives his verdict. What more do you want?

Konix Stripped

At last it's been revealed. Rumours suggested that the Konix console – official name the Multi-System – would be something special. But nothing could prepare us for how special!

What Konix has done simply re-defines the idea of video games. Forget all those anonymous black and grey boxes with their bland joystick ports. Konix has listened to what games players and software houses really want – and head man Wyn Holloway admits that he got a lot of input from letters to magazines, so somebody is listening.

Then he decided what price people would pay – and told his engineers to design something that would meet all his criteria. The result is, quite simply, the answer to every games player's dreams.

The Console

The Multi-System looks more like a glorified joystick than a console. A horseshoe shaped base supports a tilting panel with a hub. You can attach a steering wheel to this – or handlebars or a yoke control, of the sort found in helicopters – whichever the game demands.

But novel control doesn't stop there. On either side of the main unit are levers, to serve as accelerators, gear shifts and the like. And a separate unit contains twin pedals, so you're feet will have something to do while your hands are frantically steering your car, boat, plane . . .

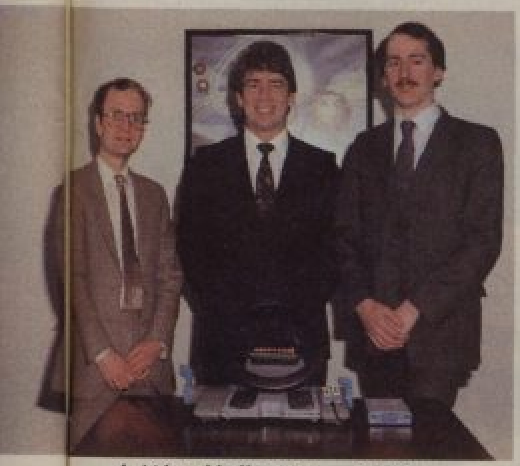
Of course there is a joystick port for traditionally controlled games. Another socket allows you to connect a key card, which supplies a total of thirty possible options. This means that the Multi-System is suited to everything from shoot'em ups to complicated simulations.

Impressed? We've only just begun. The console features 'tactile feedback'. Put simply, that means that if your on-screen car rides into the rough, the steering wheel will shake about in your hands. Now that's something your C64 – or even your Archimdes – can't provide.

And the cost of this mind boggling basic system.

▼The Konix hydraulic chair.





▲ *Wyn Holloway – centre – the man behind Konix.*

Just under £200 – but you'll have to wait for the summer before they're in the shops.

Software and Stuff

Another feature which will help keep the Multi-System within a realistic price range is that it uses 3½", one megabyte disk software. Not normal 3½" disks, mind you – they're specially modified to make piracy impossible, which should help keep publishers happy. The result – games will cost just £14.99.

The console will come with a disk so you can play immediately. By Christmas Konix aims to have 40 titles available, from all the major software houses, including both conversions of top titles and original games, growing to 100 releases after the first year.

Wyn Holloway reports that he had the head of one American company on his knees, begging to write for the machine. Whether he agreed or not he won't say, but he is keeping a careful check to ensure that all titles, which will be published through Konix, are of the highest quality, meaning they must have been in the top ten.

We saw a demo program, which featured a Zarch type landscape – only it was faster and smoother than the Archie program. Then an F-19 flying over fields, houses and trees – very impressive. Graphics are dazzling, with a palette of 4,096 colours, all of which can be used at one time, plus resolution up to 512x200.

Included as standard are such rarities as eight way smooth scrolling and vector graphics for 3D landscapes. Audio doesn't lag behind either. You can have 25 stereo channels of CD quality sound booming out – giving the Multi-System the capabilities of a Yamaha DX-7 synth!

Naturally it takes some clever electronics to do all this. In charge is an 8086 processor, best known for its use in PCs, but drives it at a phenomenal 6 Mhz. But the really hard working devices are two custom chips, which control the sound and graphics.

There's only 128K memory as standard but the operating system is able to read in new bytes from the disk even while it's controlling a game, so this should be enough. However if you want to expand you'll be able to do so yourself – and most repairs, should they be required, will be d.i.y. jobs also. Now that's what we call user friendly.



▲ *The light gun – recoils like a real rifle.*

Expansion

Despite giving you most of the features that are expensive peripherals with other consoles, if they're available at all, Konix has come up with some really exciting expansion options.

First off there's the inevitable light gun – but what a gun! Whenever you fire at the screen it will recoil, just like a real rifle. You'll be able to choose between single and repeated fire, and customize it with sights, stock and the like. Getting properly armed will cost just under £40.

Another £40 will buy an exercise bike – but it's not just to work off your excess weight. Connect it up to the Multi-System and your actions will be conveyed to the screen.



▲ *The steering wheel shudders when you crash.*

But the real thrill is The Chair. Yes, from this summer, if you want the true Space Harrier mobile experience you won't have to perch yourself on a wobbly stool. Konix has devised a moving seat and it will only cost £150!

Designed to take both the Master System and up to a 14" colour TV, the chair features tilt of up to ten degrees in three directions. Wyn Holloway says they experimented with 15 degrees but found that it was just too much at the speeds the chair can twist and turn. And as its designed to take up to 18 stones, even Garry Williams will be able to join in.

And Wyn promises that this is just the start! So in about six months time, all being well, you'll be able to fly a jet fighter into combat, bombarded by stereo sound, jolting around in your seat every time you take a hit. The only thing Konix seems to have forgotten is an air discomfort bag. Happy landings!



▲ *The final Konix – add ons galore.*

Mean Machines

Rampage



▲ *The monster puts his fist through the wall.*

► **MACHINE: SEGA.**
► **PRICE: £24.95.**
► **REVIEWER: JULIAN RIGNALL.**

Activision, released *Rampage* on the home computers last Christmas, and now they've finally got round to doing a Sega conversion – and it's pretty good, too.

One or two players take the roles of giant monsters, either Godzilla, King Kong or a huge Werewolf, and run amok on a mission of destruction and mayhem through a variety of cities. The objective is simple: smash, bash and eat everything in sight, and try and keep out of the way of the army, who have been drafted in to stop you having fun.

Tanks, personel carriers and jeeps drive around, helicopters buzz in the air and soldiers lean out of windows; all attempt to shoot at the monsters and wear down their energy bars, the depletion of which signals the end of the game. But those monsters aren't going to let those pesky people wreck their wrecking, and they can swat at choppers, pummel vehicles and grab soldiers from buildings and eat them – which replenishes energy!

To clear a screen the monsters have to raze all the buildings to the ground, which is done by climbing up their sides and beating the brickwork. Repated thumping makes great holes in the building, and if enough damage is done, it collapses. When all the buildings are demolished, the monsters go on to the next screen, where more army reinforcements are lying in wait.

With plenty of originality and a great sense of humour, *Rampage* is a brilliant first Sega release for Activision. The graphics are marvellous, with detailed sprites and neat touches, like the monster's expressions changing as they eat, jump and get shot.

Gameplay is addictive, and laying waste to entire cities is great fun, especially when there are two monsters on the rampage!

▼ *Smash the city to smithereens.*



RAMPAGE

► GRAPHICS	83%
► SOUND	75%
► VALUE	77%
► PLAYABILITY	89%
► **OVERALL**	**81%**

Rastan



► **MACHINE: SEGA.**
► **PRICE: £24.95.**
► **REVIEWER: EUGENE LACEY.**

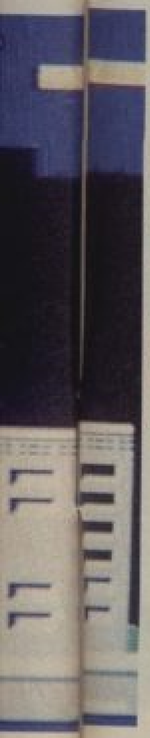
Rastan provides further proof of the growing library of top-notch arcade conversions now coming on stream for the Sega.

The Taito arcade adventure with a heavy dash of swords and sorcery thrown in was a monster hit in the arcades in '87. The first thing that strikes me about this version is its superiority to the 8-bit home computer versions.

The six levels of Rastan are infested with assorted monsters – harpies, minotaurs, bats, snakes and dragons. These nasties

▼ *Rastan leaps across the river.*



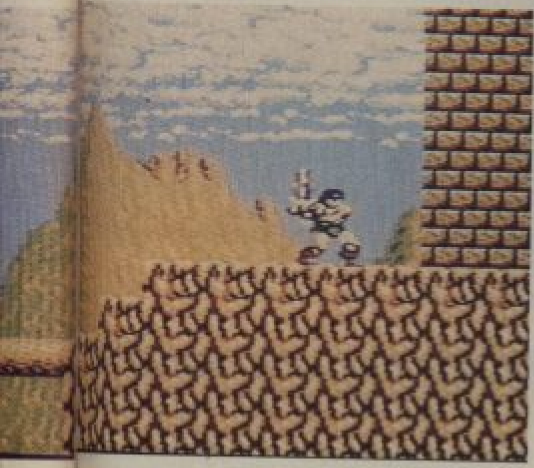


have been unleashed by the evil wizard Karg – who can take on the ugly form of a multi-headed dragon.

Playing the part of the warrior Rastan you must battle your way to the end of the sixth level where you confront Karg himself. To kill him you will have to lop off all of his six heads – no easy task as he makes a tough opponent – hopping around the screen and fighting back fiercely.

The levels scroll in four directions – which means that you have to explore above and below ground as well as making your way from left to right. Ropes, ladders, moving platforms, and rafts to cross lakes all have to be negotiated to get to the end of levels. A fair degree of platform skill. is therefore essential to succceed.

Talking of the platform aspect that was one thing I



didn't like about *Rastan*. In some of the leaps – over flames and water – you can fall short and not die. This is a bit easy considering the arcade original left you no such quarter – extracting a life if you were a pixel out with your leap.



One well thought out feature is the continue or start again option. A couple of quick button presses and you are back in the game exactly where you left off. Sensibly, the game only lets you do this four times – to stop you completing it at a sitting, albeit a particularly long one.

Rastan fans will find this a satisfactory conversion of a splendid coin-op game. If you haven't played the coin-op it will still appeal as an entertaining hybrid of beat 'em up, platform, and arcade adventure. A welcome addition to the Sega library.

SEGA

► GRAPHICS	75%
► SOUND	70%
► VALUE	60%
► PLAYABILITY	80%
► **OVERALL**	**73%**



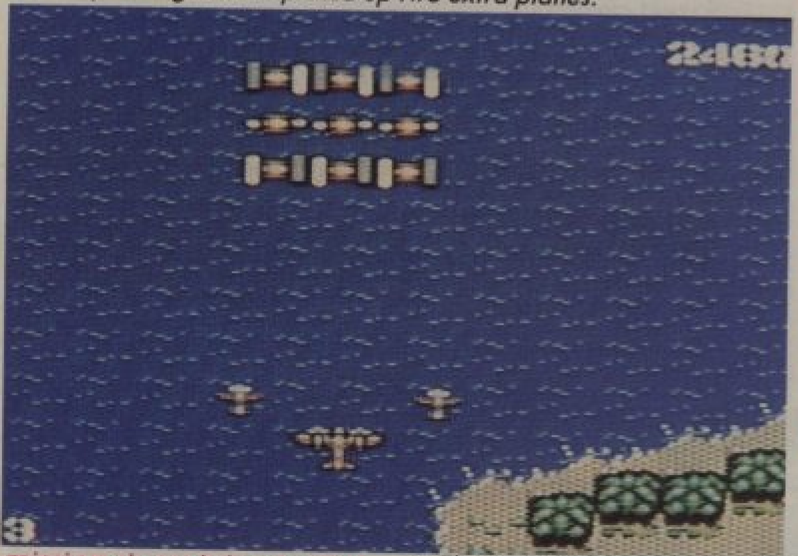
▲ 'P' stands for power up.

Bomber Raid

► **MACHINE: SEGA.**
► **PRICE: £24.95.**
► **REVIEWER: JULIAN RIGNALL.**

Bomber Raid is a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up in the same vein as *1942*.

Taking control of a crumby old fighter, it's the player's task to fly a solo mission deep into enemy territory, blasting all and sundry along the way.



▼ Ace pilot Rignall has picked up two extra planes.

The action is split into five different missions, each one having a giant mothership at the end.

When the game starts, the fighter is a pretty useless piece of equipment and is armed with a double-shot cannon. However, power-ups can be collected by blasting aerial mines and picking up the symbols they leave behind. Occasionally a red symbol is dropped, and if this is collected a little plane appears to the left of the player's fighter, adding even more firepower. A second wing plane can be collected in similar fashion.

The enemy are a varied bunch, ranging from aeroplanes and missiles to tanks and gun emplacements. All shoot at the player and attempt to destroy all of his five lives.

When the final "ultimate weapon" on level five is destroyed, the action returns to level one, but with faster enemy craft.

Bomber Raid is fun, but is marred by the fact that it's too easy. It takes little practice to go all the way through to level five, and once you've done that the appeal wanes. The graphics and sound are fairly good, but they're let down by the gameplay – it's just not challenging enough.

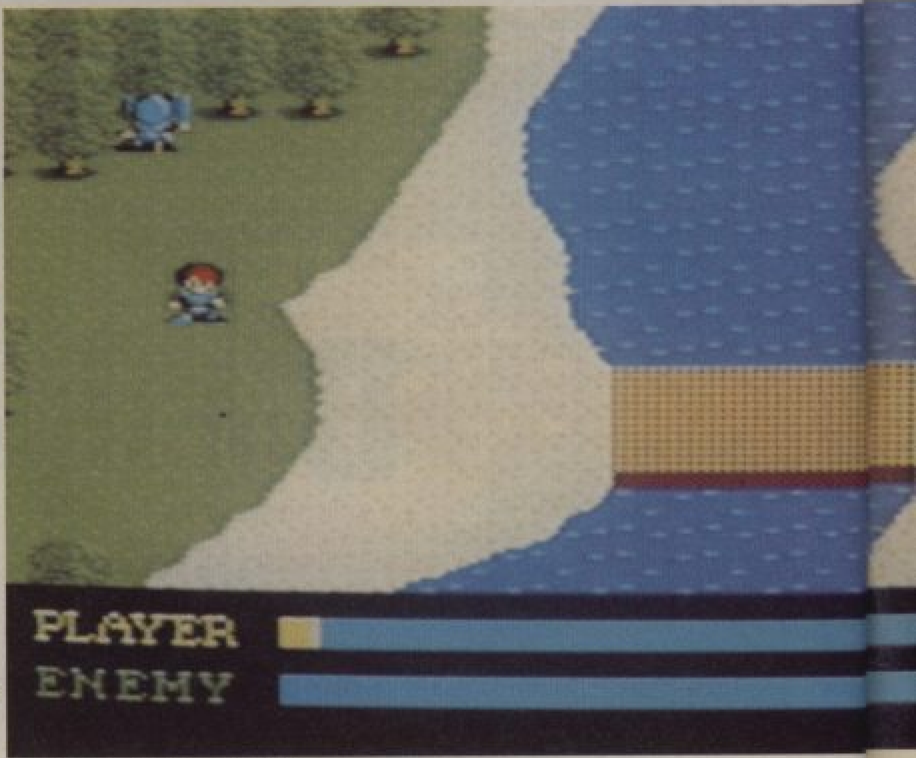
SEGA

► GRAPHICS	67%
► SOUND	69%
► VALUE	38%
► PLAYABILITY	61%
► **OVERALL**	**60%**

▼ Three gunboats – tough obstacle on Level 1.



Mean Machines



Large map to explore.

Y/S

► **MACHINE: SEGA.**
► **PRICE: £39.95.**
► **REVIEWER: JULIAN RIGNALL.**

Sega owners who enjoy role playing/arcade adventure-type games have never had it so good, with two excellent RPGs released this month – *Phantasy Star* and this, *Y/S*.

Like *Phantasy Fighter*, *Y/S* comes with a lithium battery incorporated in the cartridge, allowing you to load and save games, as you would with a disk-based game.

The story tells of a swordsman called Aron Christian who is on a quest to retrieve six parts of a magic book before a dastardly sorcerer called Dark Delt can get his mits on it. You play the good guy (of course), and knowing that you're after this magic tome, Delt uses all his evil powers to stop you, and every step of the quest is fraught with danger.

The game is played over a large scrolling map, with sub-screens depicting smaller locations. Shops can be entered to buy extra supplies, and you can also meet and talk with people, as well as read from the book when you find it to use its magic.

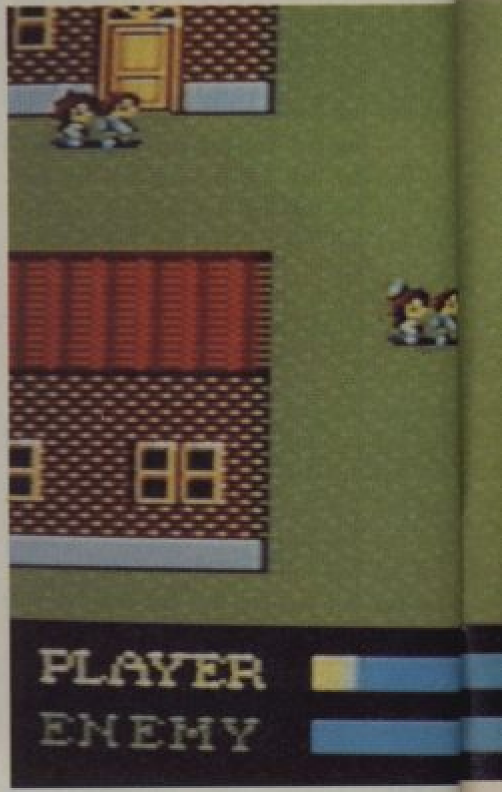
Status and equipment screens can also be called up to check on Aron's experience and hit points, and any weapon being carried can be selected for use.

As well as being a massive and thoroughly engrossing RPG, *Y/S* also boasts some stunning graphics. The backdrops are beautifully coloured and highly detailed, and



▼ *Y/S: stunning graphics.*





the sub-screens are superb, with gorgeous use of shading. The sprites are small, but are nicely animated and highly detailed, and the whole thing looks incredible – the best I've seen on the Sega.

Y/S offers depth and playability and will keep you engrossed for weeks, and even though it is rather pricey, it's still a must.

SEGA

- ► GRAPHICS 93%
- ► SOUND 73%
- ► VALUE 77%
- ► PLAYABILITY 94%
- ► **OVERALL 92%**



▲ *Where to next?*

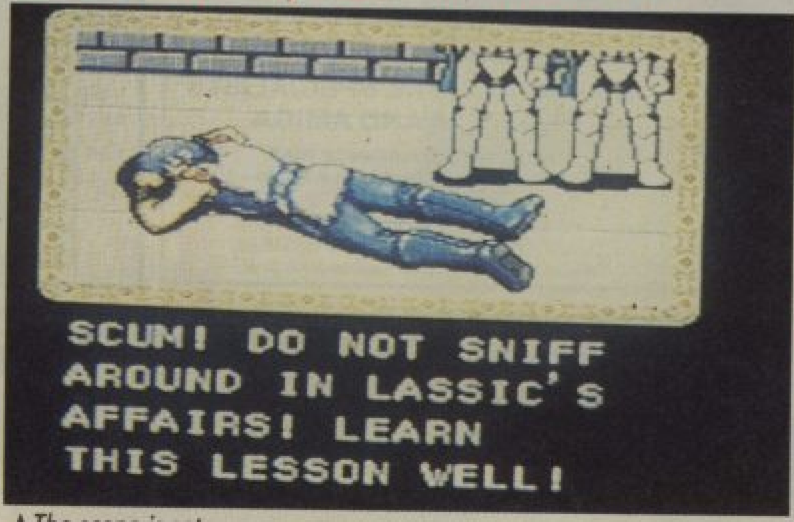


Enter the houses.

Phantasy Star

► MACHINE: SEGA.
► PRICE: £39.95.
► REVIEWER: PAUL GLANCEY.

In December last year, British Nintendo owners were presented with the Legend of Zelda, a vast RPG whose cartridge bore a lithium battery so that game positions and player attributes could be saved after the machine was switched off. Phantasy Star is Sega's attempt at a similar type of game, and features the same battery-backed storage system, allowing you to save up to five games on the cartridge at the same time.



▲*The scene is set.*

In the game you play Alis, a woman out to avenge the death of her brother who was murdered by the soldiers of the evil King Lassic. Her quest in life has become the liberation of the three planets which Lassic holds under his thumb, but she cannot triumph alone. On her journey through the three worlds Alis has to recruit three other characters, all of whom have different strengths, such as magical ability and fighting prowess.

You start the game in the town, where you can buy provisions, weapons or trade at a kind of pawn shop. Any people you meet willingly give out clues as to the location of characters and objects. As you venture outside the cities, your party is prone to random attacks from the denizens of forests, plains and seas.

Interaction with other creatures and characters in such situations is via a menu system, which, as menu systems go, is very easy to use, allowing fast and accurate selections during battle situations, and providing all the commands you need

Graphics throughout the game are very good – particularly those which depict the monsters. There are also some very nice set pieces, such as the scrolling 3D mazes which run under some cities.

The save game facility comes in very handy during play, especially at the start of the game when Alis' feeble weapons are poor protection against some of the nastier beasts. On the whole, Phantasy Star offers pretty much everything a role-playing enthusiast could ask from a Sega. It has puzzles, battles, lots of interaction and a fair bit of depth. My only reservation about recommending it is its monumental price tag – forty quid seems a lot to pay even if you do get a big game and a battery-backed memory system. Real RPG fans should definitely check Phantasy Star out, but anyone with just a passing interest in this type of game might not feel they're getting their money's worth.

- ► GRAPHICS 78%
- ► SOUND 51%
- ► VALUE 70%
- ► PLAYABILITY 80%
- ► **OVERALL 75%**

▼ *Phantasy Star: expensive stuff.*



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AD INDEX

R-Type

► **MACHINE: SEGA.**
► **PRICE: £24.95.**
► **REVIEWER: JULIAN RIGNALL.**

R-Type has been a favourite of arcade players for about a year, and now it's finally arrived on the Sega – complete in every detail.

If you've had your eyes and ears covered for the last few months, you won't know that *R-Type* is a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up with extra weapons. You wouldn't know that the game has eight levels, each populated by hordes of homicidal enemy craft and a giant guardian, and the objective is to destroy them all and confront the evil Bydo at the end of the last level and blow him away to save the day. But I'm sure you *have* had your ears and eyes open, so I won't bother to tell you.

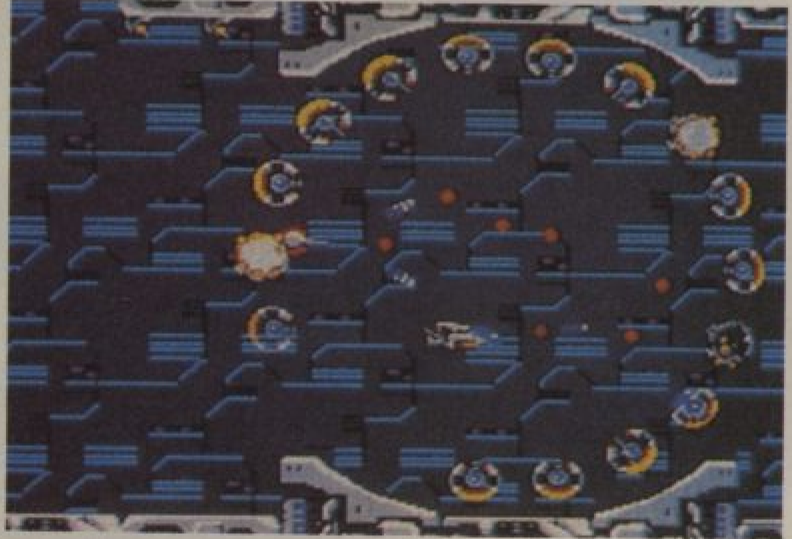
Obvious comparisons are with the current crop of computer conversions, and I'm glad to say that the Sega version puts the 8-bit versions to shame, and while it doesn't quite have the graphic finesse of the ST conversion, it's far more playable.

The alien patterns are almost identical to the coin-op, and the end-of-level guardians are despatched in exactly the same way, so you can come straight off the coin-op and play it in the same way – something I always like to see in a conversion.

The game is addictive from the outset, with blasting galore as you take on the might of the Bydo empire. Things get even better once you start picking up the power-ups, with wholesale destruction when you get hold of helix and reflecting lasers – fleets of aliens are blasted with a single shot. Very satisfying!

The graphics are very good throughout, with detailed and colourful sprites – the end guardians are exceptional, especially the snake and heart at the end of level two. It must be said that the game does flicker a bit when things get busy, but it doesn't detract from the gameplay (anyway, even the coin-op slows down at times!).

R-Type is by far the best blast available on the Sega, so it goes without saying that no shoot 'em up fan should be without it.



▲ Gun emplacements on level one.

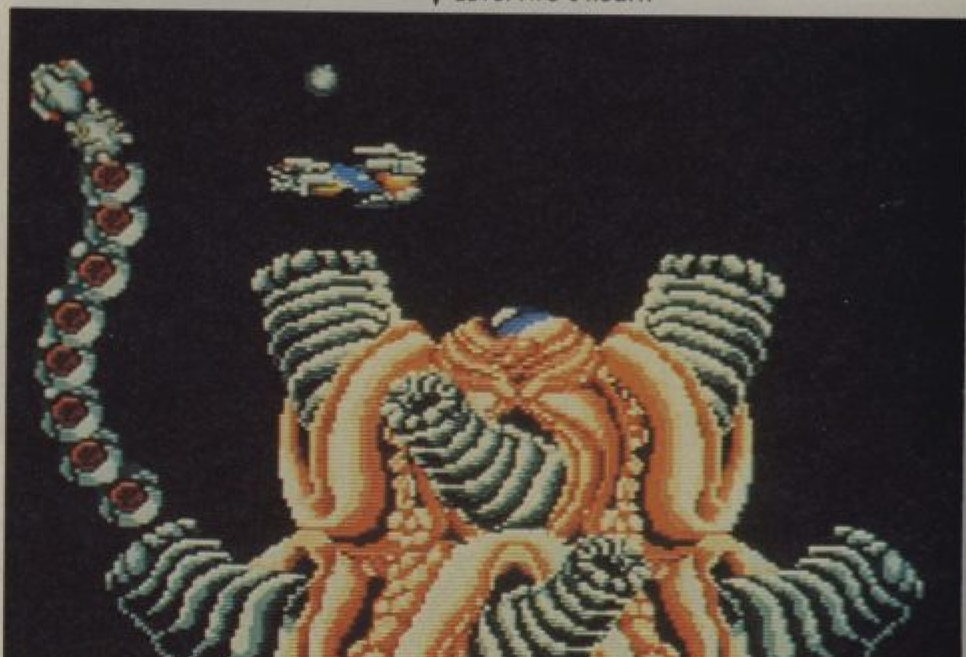


▲ The big mothership.

SEGA

► GRAPHICS	88%
► SOUND	89%
► VALUE	80%
► PLAYABILITY	94%
► **OVERALL**	**87%**

▼ Level two's heart.



Mean Machines News

Coming Next Month

Sega's Cyborg Hunter arrived just a little too late for review this month, so you'll just have to make do with this news story and picture until next ish.
It's a horizontally scrolling arcade adventure, in the mould of Zillion, and casts the player as a mercenary who enters the fortress of the evil Vipron and destroys his army of cyborgs.

We've had a quick glimpse, and it looks pretty action-packed stuff – wait four weeks, and we'll tell you all about it.
But available here soon for all you sports fans on the Sega are California Games, a translation of the superb seven-game computer simulation, Walter Payton Football, Reggie Jackson Baseball and Super Basketball.

Arcade players will be glad to hear that Irem's Vigilante, Altered Beast and Time Soldiers will also soon be available, as well as Alf, a game of the TV programme, and Alex Kidd in High-Tech World.

We'll be brining you full reviews as and when we get them.

▼*Cyborg Hunter – review next month.*



Look No Hands

Broderbund's revolutionary new 'U-Force' had punters gasping in amazement at the recent Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vagas.

The show stopping device is an add-on for the Nintendo which enables gamers to control the characters in the software with just their hands – no joystick.

In Mike Tyson's Punch Out for example the demonstrator simply stood in front of the U-Force and threw punches at its black perspex screen.

The electronics inside the window interpreted these movements and reproduced them in the game – flooring Tyson at one stage with a mighty right hand swing.

The U-Force was also demonstrated with Kung Fu games and even Super Mario Bros – where Mario was made to run along by a gentle undulating hand movement.



▲*Playing Rad Racer with the U-Force.*

The U-Force uses a number of electronic sensors and propietary circuitry developed by Broderbund to read the players movements. It will sell for £40 in America and will be available in May. There are currently no plans for a UK launch of the U-Force – though this may change now that Broderbund have appointed Domark to act for them as official representatives in the UK.

Nintendo Dominate

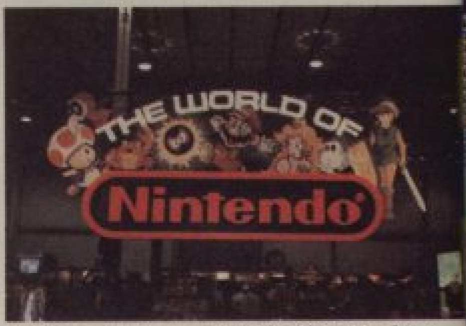
Nintendo's football pitch sized stand dwarfed all others at the recent Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas – with stacks of new games and add-ons available for the Nintendo Entertainment System.

As is always the case with Nintendo, however, most of the games on show will not see launch in the UK for some considerable time. Probably not until next year at the earliest.

It is a strange situation. In America and Japan there are literally hundreds of titles available for the Nintendo with several new titles launched every month.

Nintendo's policy in the UK is firmly to launch only two titles per month.

Some of the titles you can look forward to if and when Nintendo decide to make them available in the UK are PacMan, Gauntlet, Blasteroids, Road Blasters, Who Framed Roger Rabbit, Friday the 13th, Back to the Future, Beetlejuice, and the Karate Kid.



▲*Nintendo's stand at the C.E.S. show.*

If you own a Nintendo, therefore, C+VG's advice is to sit tight and save your money 'cause sooner or later there are going to be some red hot games hitting these shores.

COMPUTER +video GAMES

Next Month



You gasped in amazement at its graphics when it was previewed at the PC Show. You've seen it on Motormouth. Now the C+VG review team put Weird Dreams through its paces. Does the gameplay live up to the graphics? C+VG has all the answers, plus stacks of Motormouth and Weird Dreams goodies to win in a fabulous competition.

And we'll be bringing you the latest reviews, news and previews of computer, console and arcade games – as well as the best hints, tips and maps around. C+VG: the games player's bible – it's available on March 16 for a mere £1.20. Don't even think about missing it.

Out To Lunch

John Minson makes a whistle stop tour of the Winter Consumer Electronics show in Las Vegas to report on the 'big' deals going down. Next month we bring you a full report on all the new games, gadgets, and computers.

A fortnight in Las Vegas and a man could go mad. Twenty four hour *action; night-time* bright as day; neon sign striving to out-do neon sign as far as the eye can see. And everywhere there are slot machines, from the airport arrival hall to the departure lounge.

But I'm not in Glitter Gulch for the gambling. I'm not here for a fortnight, either. Forty hours is my limit; forty hours to stroll round the Consumer Electronics Show taking in all that's new in TV, video, hi-fi, and yes, of course, computers. What's the latest action Stateside?

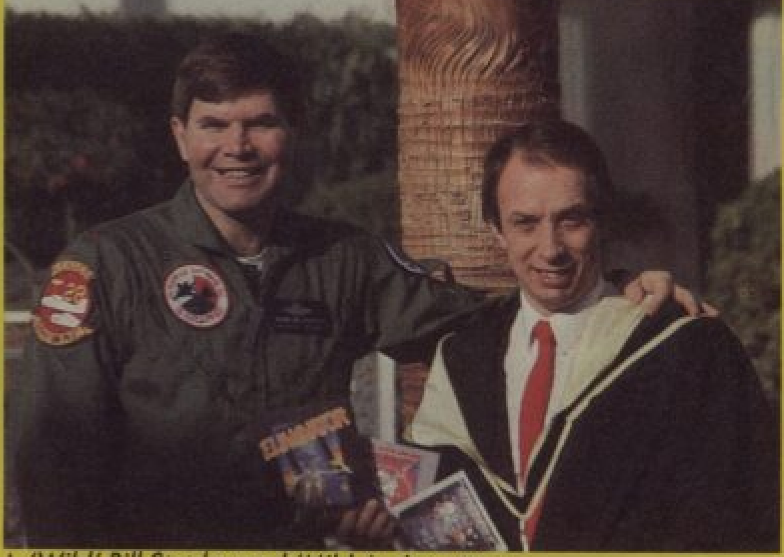
The first person I stop to ask is . . . Andrew Hewson! Then I bump into Dominic and Mark of Domark, who say "Super. Fantastic," before tripping off to win a bundle at the blackjack tables. Reeling I run into Steve Wilcox of Elite . . . he even has his own stand to test the territory. And there's Dr Tim Langdell of the Edge talking to the lady from Marvel Comics in case there are any superheroes who want to cat-sit Garfield.

Dammit, aren't there any Americans in this place? Of course there are and pretty soon I'm asking Major 'Wild Bill' Stealey about this British invasion. I mean, shouldn't he send in a squadron of F-19's to blast Mirrorsoft, Telecomsoft and all the other Brit-softs back to Blighty? Apparently not.

"The American market has fallen over itself with very complex products. We need product which you can fire up and play almost immediately," says Bill. Which is apparently what we Brits can provide in abundance.

Hewson has been producing quality, not quantity, for over five years. Now the New World is going to taste the delights of Netherworld, Exolon, Eliminator and the like. Which is why Andrew Hewson is strolling down The Strip, dressed in a university gown. He's styled himself 'Mild Andrew' to 'Wild Bill'.

Yes, Hewson has become an affiliate label of Microprose in the States. Not



▲ *'Wild' Bill Stealey and 'Mild Andrew Hewson.*

entirely true. Hewson has become an affiliate lablel of Medalist, Microprose's latest tactical weapon in its battle for an even greater chunk of the market. Another Medalist should cross the Atlantic like a speeding spider. Paragon has enrolled ol' Web Head himself, plus his pal, the patriotic Cap, for the first in a series of Marvel Superhero games.

Company veep (that's Vice President in US speak) FJ Lennon introduced me to the game. Spiderman and Captain America battle it out with a vile collection of star villains in Doctor Doom's Revenge. The graphics and smooth animation made it look just like a comic book come to life.

Those Paragons of virtue will be busy producing the first ever computer adaptation of sci-fi rpg Traveller as well. Despite its vast and detailed nature they've been cramming code into memory to bring you The Zhodani Conspiracy, a tale of double and triple cross somewhere in space. Expect it around August.

I couldn't leave Microprose's luxury suite without sampling another Danish Pastry . . . sorry, without having a word with the Major about future 'Prose plans. Big news from the



▲ *Mario and Princess Mushroom – in the flesh.*

battle-ground is M1 Tank Platoon in which you drive a battle tank down the central reservation, all the way from Birmingham to London.

Only kidding. Having covered almost every sort of airborne transport – and not tempted by Hang Glider Pilot – Stealey is giving the land-based boys their turn. And for all ancient Japanese, Samurai, mentioned in the Microprose profile a few months ago, is now called Sword of the Samurai.

Eventually I dragged myself back to the main hall, leaving Andrew Hewson busy with an Amiga so he could show the US journos just why his games mean business. Things had been happening on the floor.

By now Domark had done it's deals including a two way arrangement with Broderbund which means we'll be seeing product from the American major over here at long last. Then in another piece of nifty contract signing the Dom Doms will be putting their software on cartridge for consoles courtesy of Tengen. Simply spiffing.

But the real eye-opener was Nintendo's village. Last month I rabbited on about how the console scene was big Stateside but you really don't know how big until you've seen the stand, where software houses of every sort show off their latest products.

Wandering away from the computer section I strayed into a demonstration of what may be the future of television. HDTV stands for High Definition Television, and there's currently tough competition to arrive at a standard. In America they use a primitive colour system named NTSC – which some wits insist stands for Never The Same Colour.

But on this demo, HDTV is to traditional signals what a scratchy old single is to a CD. The old, squarish picture is replaced by a wide-screen image. Images are bigger and brighter. Let's just hope they start producing better programmes because it would be a pity to waste all that technology on a bigger, brighter Blind Date.

Don't ask me when you'll be able to buy an HDTV set though . . . or when you'll be able to take pictures with the electronic still camera that does away with film. Or about any of the other high-tech gadgets that are guaranteed to set you drooling.

Sunday afternoon I flew out of this toy shop for the technology obsessed. I'd been so busy I'd not had time to gamble. Well, ten dollars can't hurt, as I wait for my plane. I won two tiny sums but the machine soon swallowed them up again. Would I risk another note? No way. I might have got lucky – but I preferred to save my cash for some of the products I'd seen. I felt like I'd looked into the future and I want to put down a deposit on it!



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